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THURSDAY, JANUARY 9TH, 2014

STRONG WINDS AND HIGH TIDES COMBINE AS... Sea batters the Barry coastline

**RIGHT: The waves pound the
Promenade at Whitmore Bay**
Picture by JAC OSBORNE.



SEE MORE PICTURES ON PAGE 22.

REPORT by TIM CHAPMAN

PEOPLE living in coastal areas of Barry, Penarth and the Heritage Coast witnessed giant waves, as winds and high tides combined to batter the shoreline over the weekend.

The worst of the weather was on Friday, January 3. With hundreds of flood alerts across the country, waves swept over sea walls in Penarth, Barry, Llantwit Major and Porthcawl.

In Porthcawl the waves even crept up local streets. At Cold Knap the sea began filling up the former Knap swimming pool site. Waves topped 30 feet in height.

People were warned to stay away from promenades and the exposed shoreline.

Photographer Gareth Kiddie, who captured images of the turbulent sea at the Knap, told The GEM:

"I saw the sea surging over the promenade and spilling over into the gardens to the left.

"This is where the former Knap swimming pool used to be and the sea water was effectively filling up the 'pool' again!"

"A couple walking along the Prom were clearly surprised by the water coming over where they were walking."

The Vale Council made preparations for the weekend and early part of this week.

A spokeswoman said: "We are aware of high tides, strong winds and large waves resulting in multiple flood warnings being issued in the area."

"It is important that people take common sense precautions by avoiding sea front areas,

and not wading or driving into it. We have deployed a number of resources to deal with the problems encountered along the Vale coast line."

In Llantwit Major on Friday, the Fire Brigade had to rescue a woman trapped by floodwaters in a caravan.

At various times, restrictions were placed on access to Penarth Esplanade, Llantwit Major beach, and Southerndown beach, while Penarth Pier was closed for public safety.

The spokeswoman continued: "Council officers were on site at Barry Promenade at times of high tide on Friday and

Saturday to ensure public safety. Council staff have undertaken clean-ups of a large amount of debris on Barry Promenade each day."

"There was no damage at the Eastern Shelter and the site was on a two-week Christmas and New Year shut down so there were no delays to the work."

"At Penarth, officers were on site at the Esplanade during times of high tide - again for public safety."

Forecasters say that over the next couple of weeks, it is likely to be unsettled, but not as stormy as in recent days.

Big Red's journey highlights issue of animal welfare

RIGHT: Big Red in the Romania dog pound - soon he should be in Barry.



A CANINE behaviourist from Barry is bringing an abandoned dog to the UK from Eastern Europe - in a bid to highlight the suffering of strays in Romania.

"Big Red", as the dog is known, was effectively on 'Death Row' in a shelter until James Davies decided to organise a journey from the Continent to Wales.

James told The GEM: "I am picking him up from a place in Essex in mid-January. He was due to be euthanised."

"A lot of people all over the world have been following his story."

Big Red's plight has been publicised on Facebook. Funds have been raised to pay the vet's bills, enabling him to make the trip.

James explained: "There are so many dogs out there that are suffering. Although he is aggressive, I am confident I can rehabilitate him."

Big Red is a retriever - cross. James believes his story is symbolic

and will highlight the issues of dogs in Romania.

The country has a big problem with strays. In September, the parliament approved measures for a cull in Bucharest where some dogs roam in packs.

There have been reports of dogs being

killed on the streets. Animal rights groups insist the dogs should be spayed or neutered, rather than killed, to get the canine population under control.

James has promised to keep The GEM informed of Big Red's progress when he arrives in Wales.

'Give public say on the ATC site'

**LOCAL COUNCILLOR
DEMANDS**

(SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 3)



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Anonymous donor thanked

THROUGH The GEM, I would very much like to thank the person who posted a package of vintage postcards to us at the Glamorgan War-time Heritage Centre, at Barry Island Railway Station.

They did not include an address, so we hope that they see this letter. As the postcards are of the local area, but not associated with the region's wartime heritage, we will scan them and pass the scans to Barry Library for their local history project.

The postcards themselves will be placed with our growing collection of 'non-war-time' material housed at the

Barry Library.

This material is available for the public to view, and is in safe storage, until such a time that a County Museum is established for the Vale of Glamorgan.

Should members of the public discover photos or documents that will help to build a picture of Glamorgan's wartime heritage, and those people who played a part in this, these can be taken to the Glamorgan War-time Heritage Centre, where they can either be scanned on site, or donated to our growing collection.

The museum will re-open its doors on Sunday January 12. For more information and directions, see our website at www.barryatwar.info.

Ade Pitman, Barry at War

Recycle those festive cards



LEFT: Rob with naturalist presenter Iolo Williams supporting the recycling message.

IT is estimated that a billion Christmas cards (17 for every man, woman and child in the UK) ended up in bins this Christmas.

Waste sent to landfill can create methane – a powerful 'greenhouse' gas. However, if everyone in the UK recycles just one card through recycling or re-using them, it would save 1,570 tonnes of CO2 equivalent greenhouse gases – the same as taking 500 cars off the road for a year.

So please add these to your kerbside box. Schoolchildren can also take their festive cards to school to recycle, as part of the Christmas card recycling competition.

Coun Rob Curtis, Barry.

Gwyn's BEM well deserved

MEMBERS of the Llantwit Major Amateur Boxing Club would like to congratulate Mr Gwyn John on getting the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours List.

This award is well overdue.

Gwyn has worked tirelessly, not just for football, but also the community in Llantwit Major.

Tony Meakin, Llantwit Major Amateur Boxing Club.

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We will (in certain circumstances) protect a writer's identity, if requested. Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, **DON JOHN**, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7E OR email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

Are councils in their present form outdated?

MUCH has been written lately about the way in which the Vale Council's decision-making in relation to key issues has left local residents questioning the wisdom and rationale applied by those responsible.

We are being constantly reminded of financial cutbacks and shortfalls in Government funding and allocation, yet there is little evidence to suggest that the council has any sort of adaptive action plan or strategy to deal with the problems and challenges faced within the Vale.

Services are being eroded and dismantled, yet the timing of a costly council chamber refit has obviously only served to reinforce the view that councillors are detached from reality.

Whilst Coun Neil Moore outlined a need to address the requirements contained within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, because of a 10 year non-compliance, I cannot help but wonder about the other priority areas where the quality of people's actual day-to-day lives might have benefited from a substantial cash injection.

Coun Moore further mentioned that the update had brought with it an Excellence in Access award. Clearly an adaptation in the home for a physically disabled person, or maybe appointing a further occupational therapist to clear the backlog of outstanding assessments doesn't have the same kudos for the council.

Sadly, I feel that councillors seem more preoccupied with blame shifting, self promotion and hand wringing – and I am yet to see anything which gives me any sort of confidence that somebody

actually has a grip on things and we are likely to see improvement anytime soon.

Councillors may feel that they are doing their best under difficult circumstances and constant sniping and criticism is unjust. However, I can't think of too many job positions where performance effectiveness and outcomes are not scrutinised and measured.

A recent letter to The GEM queried the need for so many councillors, particularly when it is less than obvious what they actually 'bring to the table'.

Perhaps councils in their present form are outdated and maybe money could be well spent on engaging the services of external business consultants to examine the inner workings of the council with a view to sharpening processes, measuring effectiveness and ensuring that we are getting value for money.

This may at least reassure us all that the apparent self-perpetuating system is fit for purpose and the right people are in place, guiding the important decisions which have a huge impact on us all.

Rob Taylor, Barry.

Double standards on car parking

WITH reference to last week's GEM letter headed 'Double yellow lines mean No Waiting' I would like to bring to the attention of Mr Roger Everest that the whole of the area of The Butts, Cowbridge, has double yellow lines, yet recently the law has been interpreted differently by the traffic wardens.

Parking tickets are now being handed out in certain areas of The Butts when they were not previously. The public need to have a clear understanding, as the wardens are not treating all the Butts area the same.

Yes – the law states that there should be no parking from the double yellow lines to the boundary

wall/fence/hedge ... yet in the area of the cattle market, there are double yellow lines – the boundary is the metal railings.

Between this area there are about 20 or more cars parked daily, but these do not get tickets. Also at the back of the library the parking boundary is the high wall, yet cars are allowed to park in this area.

What is the difference? Perhaps Mr Everest can explain this?

Wardens are booking some cars which are parked on verges and rough ground and not on others. This is unfair to the public as they are not telepathic.

The Vale Council needs to look into this problem. How many other people have been fined here and feel unfairly treated? Are they as confused as I am?

Eileen Bennett, Llantwit Major.

'GIVE UP YOUR ALLOWANCES TO HELP CUT THE DEFICIT'

IN reply to the letter by Coun Rob Curtis, there are 45 councillors in the Vale of Glamorgan – why I don't know.

Why have we got more than one councillor per ward (some have 3 or more)?

How about then foregoing allowances for a year, just take out of pocket expenses – that would save us close on a million pounds and perhaps go towards cutting our council taxes.

He says the Welsh Assembly is helpless to help because of the Government cutbacks – don't forget the present Government did not take office until 2010. There are 60 members there, and what have they done for our benefit?

Since 1998 when it was formed, the Health Service, ambulance service, education and finance, have all gone down the tubes. What did we have before then? More than we have got today. Perhaps

they too could give up their allowances to help out with the deficit.

Here is something to think about: in the UK in Parliament we have 800 in the House of Lords, 630 MPs, 60 Welsh Assembly members and who knows how many councillors throughout the land – that's not counting Scotland and Ireland.

America has 360 Congressmen to run the whole country.

What are we doing wrong?

Mr B Kirke, Barry.

The language is our identity

IAM sick and tired of some people in Wales who constantly complain about the Welsh language being used in road signs, supermarkets and shops (GEM letters, December 19).

They complain about the cost, of being unable to pronounce street names and road signs etc.

We travelled through France/Brittany last year. All the signs were in French. So were the super-

market signs. Did we have a problem? None whatsoever.

The year before, it was Spain, all the signs were in Spanish – no difficulty at all!

Which proves that a little bit of effort with pronunciation and learning a little of a language produces positive results.

The doubters in Wales need to get a life and live in the real world. Welsh is the oldest living language in Europe. If we lose the language, we lose our identity.

A Jones, Coychurch.

'KEEP CAMERAS OUT OF LIVE THEATRE'

RECENTLY, we took our grand-daughter to St David's Hall Cardiff to see the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* and what a joy it was – not just because of the superb performance but because it was NOT constantly interrupted by people taking photographs on their mobile phones, which is very often the case in live theatre performances.

As head of drama in a comprehensive school I was responsible for the running of the annual school production. There was always a large notice posted around the hall, and a full page in the programme pointing out that it was a live performance by young inexperienced actors who could be easily distracted.

We added that the crew had worked very hard to get the lighting effects just right and the other people in the audi-

ence wanted to watch and enjoy the performance and that taking photographs, especially with flash, was quite simply not allowed.

If anybody was rude enough to ignore the notice they would be discreetly and quietly told that if they persisted they would be asked to leave.

I suspect the absence of flashes going off might well have been partly down to the nature of the audience that ballet attracted and I dare say that, in an auditorium seating perhaps 2,000 people it is rather more difficult but I do think that in an age when there are notices on trains telling people how to behave (not to swear, consume alcohol, put feet on seats etc) theatres could use similar notices to make it much clearer that playing about with a mobile phone and taking photographs in a theatre is downright rude, is distracting to the performers, and spoils the enjoyment of the performance for the rest of the audience.

David Alexander, Barry.

'WOMEN FOR THE TOP JOB'

IWOULD like to take this opportunity to thank Jane Hutt for the sterling work she does in our community in Barry. She sets an excellent example as can be seen by the way she uses the Assembly recess time to support local groups.

I would also like to thank Alun Cairns for his excellent work in the Vale.

Many of you may be fans of 'Scandinavian Noir Cinema' and television; it is also forty years since Abba won

the Eurovision Song Contest.

But, Wales – as a small nation – needs to look north; to Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark to learn from their democratic systems.

In these countries, women have been promoted to directorships; management and the 'top job' in politics, for many years – in advance of the rest of Europe and the UK.

Perhaps it is time for the powers that be in – Cardiff Bay – to look to the – equal and talented women of Wales – for the top job?

Phil Stansfield, Barry.

HIGH TIDE TIMES (UNTIL JANUARY 16)

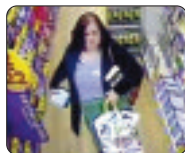
The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary.

For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
09 Thur			12.29	8.4
10 Fri	00.56	8.0	13.33	7.9
11 Sat	02.12	7.8	14.49	7.9
12 Sun	03.31	8.0	15.55	8.1
13 Mon	04.21	8.3	16.47	8.5
14 Tues	05.14	8.8	17.35	8.8
15 Wed	05.55	9.1	18.14	9.2
16 Thur	06.26	9.3	18.52	9.3

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

POLICE ISSUE CCTV IMAGE



POLICE investigating two separate thefts at WH Smith on Holton Road in Barry have published a CCTV image of a woman they want to speak to in connection with incidents on Monday, November 4 and Saturday, December 7.

Anyone with information or who can identify the image, is asked to contact Barry Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 (quote occurrence number 62130386498).



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'Give public a say on ATC Woodlands site' - LOCAL COUNCILLOR DEMANDS

"Use of the site has not yet been decided...suitability has not been determined" - council replies

A BARRY councillor says that the Vale Council should consult with local residents about what will happen to a town centre site.

The ATC Woodlands site on Woodlands Road, near Jenner Park, is to be demolished shortly, and Plaid Cymru's Ian Johnson said residents should be consulted on the possible future uses - just as Dinas Powys residents were consulted about the Bryneithin site.

The Vale Council has informed The GEM that the current building was "not fit for purpose" and the future of the site had yet to be determined.

Coun Johnson explained: "The Vale's social services department has decided to demolish the ATC Woodlands site on Woodlands Road and transfer day centre activities there to other facilities in Barry."

"The site will soon become vacant and the council's director of resources will report back to the cabinet on options for the land."

"The Vale Council made great play of their consultation with Dinas Powys residents about the future of Bryneithin, the former dementia home that closed last year."

"As the local councillor, I want to see local residents in Barry have the same opportunity to discuss what happens to vacant sites in their neighbourhood."

"While waiting to see what the council's director of resources suggests for the Woodlands Road site, the Vale Council should prepare a consultation on what local people want to see there - rather than giving limited options, hidden in a cabinet report that very few people will read."

"The taxpaying public should have their say on what happens to council land. The whole process must be transparent."

The Leader of the Vale of Council, Coun Neil Moore, told The GEM that no firm decision had been made on the site's future.

"The situation in Dinas Powys was somewhat different in that there was a commitment to retain the site for use for the elderly and no such commitment has been made for the Woodlands Road site."

"The current building is not fit for purpose. The use of the site after demolition has not yet been decided, as its suitability has not yet been determined."

"When any consideration is given, there will have to be a planning application and local residents and local members will be consulted," he promised.



Coun Johnson at the ATC Woodlands site.

Choir in rehearsal

FOLLOWING a hectic Christmas period, during which community concerts were given for Friends and Neighbours at the Pioneer Hall, for Velindre Cancer Centre at All Saints Church and the CLIC charity for children with cancer at Wetherspoons, Barry Male Choir is enjoying a well-deserved rest.

Rehearsals restarted in Trinity Church Hall, Trinity Street, Barry, on Monday (January 6).

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NEWS FROM BARRY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Pupils show off talent for public speaking!



Vale Mayor Coun Margaret Wilkinson officially unveiled the art work.



Barry Comprehensive School student Arron Burton looking at some of the artwork his designs inspired.



Barry Comprehensive School's year-10 debating team Ellis, Finnian and John.

RECENTLY, Barry Comprehensive School hosted the English Speaking Union's Vale of Glamorgan debating competition.

The school entered two teams – one year-11 and one year-10 – indicating the strong talent base for public speaking in the school.

On the night, the two teams faced stiff competition from three other schools.

The subjects debated by our teams were 'Has political correctness gone mad?' and 'Should military service be compulsory?'

The judges noted the high standard of public speaking demonstrated by all the teams taking part. However, when the results were declared, two pupils from year-10 – Ellis Robson and Finnian Rees – were awarded the titles of best chairperson and best questioner respectively.

The year-10 speaker, John McAllister, was described as being a "future newsreader" due to the clarity of his argument and the maturity of his views.

However, the overall team award, and the team that will go forward to the national

championships at The Senedd on March 4 was awarded to the year-11 team, Mitchel Thorngate, Thomas Klee and Matthew Ireland. This is the second year running that this team has made the national final and we wish them every success.

A very proud night for Barry Comprehensive School.

A-level students' art project TWO years ago, Barry Comprehensive art department was

contacted by the artist David Mackie who invited the school to be part of a collaborative community art design project.

Mr Mackie worked with year-11 and year-12 A Level art students designing art work based on natural forms.

The designs were to be part of sculptural community pieces for the new Taylor Wimpey housing development 'Golwg Y Coed'.

More than 70 primary and secondary school students from five Barry schools helped Mr Mackie create the striking showpiece artworks inspired by the ancient woodland which borders the Golwg Y Coed development.

Mr Mackie held a series of workshops at the five schools and used the youngsters' best designs and ideas to create two pieces of art commissioned by Taylor Wimpey South Wales.

The first artwork is a set of decorative gates and railings which surround a children's playground.

The second is a series of striking slate and bronze monoliths alongside a public footpath leading from the development to the ancient Pencoedre Wood.

Both pieces feature a variety of images based on students' drawings interpreting the natural and archaeological heritage of the woodland, which is rich with

wildlife and was the site of a discovery of Iron Age remains.

The Mayor of the Vale, Coun Margaret Wilkinson, officially unveiled the art work.

Arron Burton and Mr Cotsen attended the unveiling ceremony, where Arron recognised and celebrated his designs, which he completed two years earlier.

Women who took to the air

WOMEN have played a big part in aviation – from the earliest days of powered flying at the beginning of the last century they have set records, been test pilots and as aeronautical engineers had a part in developing new machines.

'Lady aviators and their contribution to aviation' will be the subject of a talk by David Ephraim at the next meeting of Penarth Aviation Society this Friday (January 10).

The names and legends of some of the women are well known. They include: Amelia Earhart, born in 1897, the first woman to fly the Atlantic who disappeared over the Pacific and has never been found (though some of the freckle cream she used turned up on a

THE severe spring gales in south Wales caused much destruction last year and one morning, two parts of a circular tent took flight, travelled through space and landed in my father, Alfred Mills' back garden in Barry!

The tent was never claimed and stood vertically against his rear party wall for a couple of months, and eventually I was asked to remove it and take it to the council tip in July.

I set about reducing the size of the tent base for transport to the council refuse disposal site.

To my surprise, I detected movement between the tent fabric at floor level and thinking it might be a rat, I gingerly parted the two sections and, to my amazement, I saw a tiny kitten.

The poor mite meowed, and on examination, I saw it was a male tabby. Its eyes were just open, it was in fairly good condition and was not very old.

There seemed no likelihood that the mother would return to the kitten due to local circumstances and as other cats patrolled the area there would have been little chance of it surviving.

When I showed it to Alf, he too was amazed, and when my wife and two daughters saw the kitten, they all fell in love with it.

None of the local catteries could accept it, so we contacted my brother-in-law and he suggested that I contact my

Pacific island); Amy Johnson, who set a record flying to Australia and was lost over the Thames Estuary in 1941; Raymonde Deroche, a French actress, who was the first woman to get a pilot's licence (she flew about 300 yards); Anne Burns, the aeronautical engineer and test pilot whose life was saved when she bailed out, got tangled in the parachute lines, and landed safely in a sycamore tree.

Most of the women in David Ephraim's talk brought glamour and excitement to flying but some, like Hanna Reitsch, a Nazi who flew for Hitler, did not.

The PAS meeting will be held at Penarth Conservative Club at 8pm and visitors are welcome. Further information on 01446 721321.

YT

How Alfie's humble entrance into the world turned to joy for one local family!



ABOVE: Little Alfie shortly after he was found.



ABOVE: Alfie is now a picture of health.

nephew and his wife, well known to GEM readers as a highly-respected local historian)

We were instructed to deliver it to their registered vet in Cardiff and on examination, the kitten appeared to be in fair health, although it weighed just 300 grams.

We decided that if it could be saved, we would adopt it.

My nephew had already named the kitten Alfie, after Alf my 102-year-old father (who is

BRIAN MILLS

WINDOW WINNERS



JOINT winners of the best Christmas shop window competition organised by the Dinas Powys Community Council were 'Care in the Community' of Camms Corner and 'Crafty Art Box', Station Road.



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A WALK AROUND THE LAND OF MY FATHERS

JUST before Christmas, The GEM reported on how a Barry man, Steve Webb, had completed a 1,000-mile trek all the way round the country to raise funds for Cancer Research Wales.

Steve exceeded his £2,000 target on 'Funny Walks Wales' which took in Offa's Dyke to the east and the spectacular Welsh coast to the west.

Here he tells the full story of his epic trek.

"ON May 5, 2012, the date of the official opening of the Wales Coast Path, a tiny seed was planted somewhere in the back of my mind, a seed that over the subsequent 15 months slowly germinated and gradually changed from being just a frivolous idea to becoming a naive but definite commitment to walk not only the path but Offa's Dyke as well!

"It would be a walk around Wales of 1,000 miles or so; a walk that would allow me to see Wales from a completely new perspective, from the outside looking in; a walk that relatively few people would find the time or the inclination to try; a walk that the more I tried to ignore became something I knew I had to try.

"Retirement from the Welsh Government at the end of August 2013 meant that the time for excuses and further procrastination was over. It was time to 'just do it'.

"If nothing else it would give me a couple of months to gorge myself on the beauty, uniqueness and idiosyncrasies of Wales before moving on to other, yet to be determined,

avenues and interests.

SOLITARY

"At the age of 60 years and eight months, I started the walk on September 11 and ended it on November 10.

"It took 61 days in total, walking anti-clockwise from my home town of Barry in the Vale and averaging 15 to 20 miles a day.

"Although I was a solitary walker for the vast majority of the time, I was joined at various stages by friends and former colleagues who, in various permutations were witty, warm and (just occasionally and literally) wet companions.

"I was also hugely indebted to all those hospitality businesses which, on learning of my retirement from Visit Wales and plans to walk around Wales, were generous in their donation of free accommodation to support my chosen charity, Cancer Research Wales.

"As a way of raising awareness of the walk, the charity and last but not least the 'wonders of Wales', I posted daily updates on a Facebook page (FunnyWalksWales) and via Twitter (FunnyWalksWales@swcwebb).

FUNNY WALKS?

"Why FunnyWalks? Well, we all know a joke or two and I hoped to capture one or two of these from those I met on the journey. As it turned out though, capturing jokes from strangers wasn't always as easy as I had imagined but it was a great way to start a conversation!

"Looking back on what was an unforgettable experience, it's difficult to isolate particular high points.

"Every day had its moments – moments of beauty, charm, humour and even personal challenge.

"Even those when the rain sheeted down with relentless intensity or when the wind gusted and punched me sideways, pushing me ever closer to sheer cliff edges.

"There were days which offered a glimpse into the future, not least the very first day from Barry to Cardiff when I met Hannah and her donkey Chico on their journey around Wales, a journey that had started in Aberystwyth three months previously and one that had another two to go.

"I was excited that first day, puppy-like in my expectations of what lay ahead; Hannah, I sensed had become a toughened traveller, grown weary but still driven by a sense of purpose and duty.

"That first morning it crossed my mind that the journey may have a few surprises in store that I hadn't bargained for – hardly an earth shattering prediction but one that was proved correct on many occasions.

"Offa's Dyke took me 12 days and was no doddle with three particularly tough sections, Pandry to Hay on Wye, Llanarmon-yn-Ial to Bodfari and the hardest of the lot, Knighton to Brompton Crossroads, which has earned for itself a certain notoriety hinted at by its 'switch-back' nickname.

DELIGHT

"Views of Tintern Abbey, the Vale of Clwyd and Llanthony from on high, traversing the Montgomery Canal and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and lazily



Family reunion on the walk, from left to right: William Webb, Steve Webb and Sam Webb.

wandering around the character towns of Chepstow, Monmouth, Hay, Knighton, Kingston and Llangollen are memories that will stay with me as will those of the many hospitable, friendly and generous people I met, stayed with and chatted to along the way.

"Anglesey was a sheer delight, a full week's walking opening up long stretches of coastline previously unfamiliar to me but rich in natural beauty and signs of the island's industrial heritage.

"The stretches from Benllech to Amlwch and on to Church Bay with the brooding presence of Wylfa were particular favourites, but South Stack, Rhosneigr and Newborough Sands also stood out as did St Cwyfan's Church, the Church in the Sea near Aberffraw.

"I was also thrilled to see three red squirrels or it may have been the same squirrel three times!

HALF WAY

"The Lleyn peninsula came good after Trefor and the three stretches that followed on to Tudweiliog, then Aberdaron and Abersoch

were as enjoyable as any on the coast path, as was the leg from Pwllheli to Penrhyn-daedraeth.

"Reaching Bardsey Island marked the half way point of the journey and acted as a spur with every step taking me closer to home.

"Much is rightly made of the rugged beauty and seascape of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path and it's hard to beat the areas around Porthgain, Whitesands Bay, Freshwater West and Tenby/Saundersfoot, but I also relished the vast expanse of Morfa Dyffryn south of Harlech and the quiet charms of much of the Ceredigion Coast Path which was teaming with wildlife – dolphins leaping in Newquay providing a spectacular free show to all – adult and new born pup seals in almost every inaccessible cove and gannets, shags and cormorants hungrily harvesting the bountiful waters of Cardigan Bay.

"Nearing home, the two Gower stretches from Llanmadoc to Port Eynon and then to Mumbles stood out for me as coastal walking at its best.

DETOURS

"Although there were few low points, there

were frustrations and these all involved detours away from the coast.

"The three large privately owned estates on Anglesey, the MOD territory in Aberporth, Castle Martin and Pendine and the natural estuaries of the Dyfi, the Taf/Tawe in Carmarthen and the trek up to Briton Ferry were niggles.

"It's a pity too that the Coast Path designation is not yet used on all signposts to provide a real and obvious sense of unity.

"Anglesey and Pembrokeshire in particular seem to favour their own local designation which is understandable in part because these parts of the path pre-date the launch of an all-Wales coast path.

PROUD

"Overall, it was a superb two months. Time well spent, providing an uplifting transition into retirement."

Steve concludes:

"Wales may be a small country in size terms, but it is truly a wonderfully diverse and proud nation, that revels in and takes strength from its location on the periphery of Europe.

"It's also beautiful beyond my limited ability to describe!"

LETTERS extra

TRIBUTE TO PEGGY (93)

PEGGY TAYLOR (93) was well-known in Barry as a caring citizen who gave 50 years' service to the British Red Cross.

She was passionate about education and volunteered at the Open Learning Centre teaching adults for whom English was a second language, and those with special needs.

For many years, Peggy registered me and many others, as participants in the annual Kidney Wales fundraising walk, in memory of her son John and grandson Richard, and this

year took part herself, being pushed around the course in her wheelchair by her younger son Ricky.

"She was always doing good," her late husband once said and she was someone who believed in 'goodness' in everyone. She had a strong sense of 'fair play' and will be greatly missed by her family, friends, her church and fellow volunteers.

Peggy Taylor's funeral will take place on Thursday, January 16 at Holy Trinity Church Hall on Trinity Street at 1pm and at the Crematorium at 2.15pm. **JANE HUTT, AM for the Vale**

Grateful to the ambulance crews

AFTER reading the article about the Santa's Grotto created by ambulance men at Barry Hospital, I too felt that I wanted to comment on what a great job they do, not only through the Christmas period, but also through the rest of the year.

I normally do not look forward to attending hospital appointments, but I have been attending the day centre at Barry Hospital and all the staff have made it a very pleasant experience, particularly over the Christmas period.

People are very quick to complain when they receive a bad service and I feel that it is just as important for people to be recognised when they are providing such a good service in such a pleasant manner.

Margaret Jones, Barry.

Vinny's Vinyls at Barry Market Every Tuesday January Sale All cd's & records £1 Orders taken at negotiable prices for rare records & cd's 0745 046 0062

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ABOVE: Families enjoying the crib service at All Saints Church, Penarth.

Two crib services solved overcrowding problem!

MORE than 300 people, mostly families with younger children, attended two festive crib services at All Saints Church, Penarth.

Presented by adults and children from the congregation, it featured 'Postman Pat' delivering messages from God to Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the angels, the wise men and, indeed, the whole world!

All children attending were encouraged to play one of the roles in the Nativity story using a range of costumes, head dresses and props.

"These services are so popular that overcrowding was becoming a problem and we were having to turn

people away", said Lesley Cox, who creates and leads the All Saints Crib Service each year.

"So since 2012, we have been holding two sessions, at 2pm and 4pm, which has enabled more families to share the true meaning of Christmas with their children as part of their celebrations."

Rev Peter Cox welcomed everyone and gave a blessing at the end, and the service also featured both traditional carols and newer songs, accompanied by Nigel Lloyd-Latham on piano.

"We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!" said Lesley.

MG

Local photographer snaps an award



THE AWARD-WINNING IMAGE.

BARRY photographer Sian Lewis has achieved the distinction of winning two silver bars with the Guild of Professional Photographers' Image of the Month competition.

Lesley Thirsk, director of the guild, said she was delighted that Sian had achieved these bars.

"The guild has very demanding standards when judging photographic competitions. The judging is undertaken by a panel of internationally recognised experts from a variety of photographic backgrounds and all of the points from nine months of the competition accumulate at the end of the 12 months to 'Guild Photographer of the Year'."

A Christmas song from St Cyres



ABOVE: The St Andrews Major Primary School Choir.



The school's signing choir.

HUNDREDS of pupils from six different schools in Penarth joined together over Christmas to create a 'super choir', filming a music video of the hit song 'Merry Christmas Everyone'.

St Cyres School's television station SCTV visited all of the primaries over three days and then the footage was carefully edited together to make one video for parents, family members and friends to enjoy.

The primary schools starring in the video are Llandough, Cogan, Fairfield, Murch (including Dinas Powys Infants), Evenlode and St Andrews Major.

St Cyres music teacher, Mr Richard Hopkin, who co-ordinated the project, said: "I'd like to thank all of the primary school teachers and pupils involved in the video."

"It was lovely to see the efforts that they went to make this a success."

"I can't believe how popular the video has become, having already received thousands of online views within a few days!"

The pupils started preparing for the video in November by practising their singing and even creating their own dance routines.

The video definitely brought Christmas cheer to Penarth and all around the world, with people watching it in USA, Canada and even Australia.

The video can be viewed on St Cyres School's webpage www.stcyres.org or by searching 'A Song for Christmas St Cyres School'.



Nawaf Saleh with Mr Parker.

GCSE art workshop

YEAR-10 GCSE art pupils visited the National Museum and Gallery of Wales to take part in a workshop based on the current exhibition 'Uncommon Ground': Land Art in Britain 1966-1979.

The exhibition features the work of British artists working with the environment and using the naturally occurring features of the landscape.

Working outdoors rather than in a classroom or studio is called land art and often uses materials such as trees, stones, water and even fire to create sculpture, performance art and photography.

Eloise, an artist working at the gallery, helped pupils engage with the concepts behind many pieces on display.

She praised St Cyres pupils for their perceptive comments and individual opinions about why and how the art works were created.

By discussing the techniques and questioning Eloise, pupils discovered deeper meanings which involved

being more eco-friendly, recycling and bringing nature indoors.

The pupils voted for their favourite piece which was Antony Gormley's Flat Tree; consisting of hundreds of slices through one single tree arranged in a spiral pattern.

A German Christmas

YEAR-9 pupils had some fun in the run up to Christmas and became true German children for a morning.

Their task was to build their own gingerbread houses and follow in Hansel and Gretel's footsteps, decorating their houses with sweets, icing and all manner of yummy treats.

Some pupils showed a real flair for cake decorating and even engineering when working out how they were going to keep their structure upright within the time limit!

A lot of fun was had by all and we wish you a 'Frohe Weihnachten' from the languages faculty.

Nawaf's award

NAWAF SALEH, one of our year-11 students,



Sixth formers Oliver Thorne and Jack Declaire with their teacher Mr Richard Hopkin.



ABOVE: Making gingerbread houses for a German Christmas.

was recently awarded a special engineering award for excellence by the South Wales Institute of Engineers Educational Trust.

Nawaf is pictured (above left) with Mr D Parker, the director of the Faculty of Art, Design and Technology. We are all very proud of Nawaf's achievement here at St Cyres.

St Cyres signing choir MANY congratulations to the St Cyres signing choir, who raised £127 for the charity 'Hearing Dogs

Stalwart is recognised in New Year's Honours!

A LIFETIME'S service to grassroots football in Llantwit Major, has netted Gwyn John a British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours List, writes TIM CHAPMAN.

Gwyn and his wife, Gloria, received a letter notifying them of the honour on November 15 – and from then until New Year's Eve, when the official announcement was made, had to keep the news a secret.

For Gwyn, a man steeped in Welsh football, being recognised for his work with fellow football enthusiasts and youngsters in the town has come as a special thrill.

"When the letter arrived, I was amazed – hit for six."

"Years ago, someone in Llantwit stopped me and was kind enough to say 'you should get a gong for your work in football'."

"I laughed and said 'people get gongs for bravery, not community work'."

Gwyn was obsessed with football from a young age and has been involved in the game for more than 60 years as a player, coach, manager, club secretary and administrator.

"As a youngster, football came before everything. I ate, drank and slept football!"

Llantwit Major has always been known as a rugby stronghold, but Gwyn always thought there was enough room for both the round ball and oval ball in the town.

"One comment drove me on. Once, when I was young we were playing football and a certain person said: 'What the hell are you doing, playing football? It won't last five minutes here'."

Gwyn was determined that it should last longer than five minutes, and a vocation to the game was born.

Harry Wilkinson had been a stalwart of Llantwit Major football in the pre-war years,



GWYN JOHN BEM.

but following the war, there had been a lull in participation.

In 1962, Gwyn helped to set up Llantwit Major Athletic Football Club and was the assistant secretary.

To get the club off the ground and keep it going, he and other club officials held fundraising events and sold tickets door to door.

In 1967, he became the club secretary and it was a real boost for the town when it entered the South Wales Amateur League in the 1971-72 season.

"At the time, there were a number of people with enthusiasm who wanted to help take the club forward. My mother, Thora, was a real inspiration, too."

Gwyn's wife Gloria has supported his obsession over the years, fulfilling roles in football administration.

In the early 1970s, Gwyn used to take age group training at West Camp each evening from Monday to Friday, and then be up at 7am on Saturday mornings to help preparing pitches.

"The RAF was really good to us. We devel-

oped a real rapport with them and used three pitches at different times. The PE section were superb to us."

In the 1975-76 season, the club was able to start playing at the Recreation Ground and success soon followed under manager Alan Foster.

Gwyn's proudest achievements have been in providing opportunities for the young people of the town to play a great sport and develop as personalities – and also help create leagues like the South Wales FA Youth League for them to play in.

"It is about making them grow up to be good people. I've always said to them 'I hope you're doing well at school and you're doing your homework'."

"I believe intelligent boys make good footballers."

"It has been great over the years to see them coming back to watch their sons and grandsons play!"

Some Llantwit footballers, such as Wesley Burns, Pat Mountain and Martin Hancock, have even tasted success at full football level.

When there has been a talented local youngster, it has often been Gwyn who has contacted a higher level club, inviting them to send a scout in the hope of helping them progress in the game.

Gwyn has one more surprise in store – he will soon be notified of when and where the BEM presentation will be made.

Local lifeboat coxswain helps flood rescue

THE coxswain of Barry Dock Lifeboat Station Hugh Davies, helped flood rescue efforts in north Wales earlier this week.

He has been on standby since before Christmas, when thankfully the storms passed without incident.

"However, early in the new year, the storms that battered the UK and caused chaos in some coastal towns meant that the help of the RNLI flood rescue team, of which Spud is a member,

was needed," a spokeswoman reported.

RNLI flood rescue teams are deployed to an area in imminent danger of flooding to help evacuate people from their homes.

Flood rescue volunteers undertake training in addition to the training and rescue duties at their RNLI lifeboat stations.

Last year, Porthcawl volunteer crew member Paul Eastment was awarded a medal for rescuing a woman in floods in Devon.

Sponsored run with a message

VALE councillor Rob Curtis, raised £500 for the World Wildlife Fund, by taking part in the sponsored Great North Run.

He also contrasted the shooting of badgers in England with Wales, where they are vaccinated, by carrying a sign saying on one side – 'Please don't give me the bullet' – and on the other side, 'Instead, give me the vaccine!'

Local greengrocer now fighting back after record-breaking surgery

by PHILIP IRWIN



ABOVE:
Paul Preece (left) and his son Joel.

ONE of the best-known faces on Cowbridge High Street is recovering after undergoing major surgery – a series of three long operations totalling 38 hours.

Amazingly, Paul Preece, who runs the Strawberry Fields fruit and veg shop at Penny Lane with his son Joel, had no idea of his medical situation – and it was only discovered after he pulled a muscle playing squash!

Paul's wife, Sheryl, who runs the sweet shop 'Sweet Occasions' – also in Penny Lane – told The GEM how the family were given the shock news last July.

She said: "Paul went to see his chiropractor after pulling a muscle in his back, who was concerned about a small lump on his lower back. 'I had noticed it, but it seemed very minor, and Paul was getting absolutely no pain at all.'

However, he took the chiropractor's advice, and his doctor immediately sent him to a specialist. Things happened very rapidly then.

Sheryl said: "Paul was examined at the University Hospital of Wales, and they discovered a huge tumour that was wrapped around his spine.

"They said it was so unusual that Paul would need to be treated at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, the leading specialist hospital in this field."

The doctors at John Radcliffe spent some time assessing Paul's condition. It was rare. In fact, they had performed only 45 similar operations all year.

Planning the operation was a huge task, and they decided that a rib would need to be removed, together with a bone in his leg, to rebuild his pelvis.

When they set to work, it was a record-breaking operation.

Sheryl explained: "Paul had three operations on three successive days – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

"The Monday operation was 10 hours long, and so was the Tuesday one. Then, on the Wednesday, Paul was in theatre for 18 hours!

"When it was finally over, the doctors said that it was the biggest operation of its type that they had ever performed. He was quite a celebrity!"

Even now, it seems amazing that Paul could have been unaware of the tumour. It was, say the doctors, as big as a

melon.

She continued: "Paul has always kept fit. He played professional football for Bristol Rovers and then Newport County, and also played on for Welsh league clubs.

"He was on the go all day in the business, leaving the house at 4.30am to collect crates from the wholesalers, doing a full day's work, and then playing squash two or three times a week."

The doctors told Sheryl that being such a fit 56-year-old had made a huge difference.

They could not have attempted such a gruelling operation on a patient who was less fit and healthy.

Sadly, Paul has had to pay a price for the life-saving surgery. Sheryl said: "The doctors told Paul that some nerve damage was unavoidable, and he was resigned, even before going into theatre, to the knowledge that his right foot would be 'floppy', and he will walk with a limp.

"Also, as they had to remove muscle as well as the tumour, he needs a great deal of physiotherapy to help him recover."

Ironically, after the brilliant skills shown by the surgeons, this period of recuperation is proving the most frustrating.

Paul was told that he needs to be in a specialist rehab centre such as Rookwood in Cardiff, but there are no spare beds.

This means that Paul has been 'stuck' in the University Hospital of Wales – not getting the physio that he needs.

Sheryl said: "The University Hospital does have a hydrotherapy pool, but it is only for the use of outpatients!"

"The physio staff there are really good, and they do their best, but Paul should be in Rookwood".

In the meantime, Sheryl says that Paul's competitive spirit is showing, and he is determined to recover at a quicker rate than his doctors say he can.

Sheryl said: "He is doing exercises and lifting weights in bed, and asks for as much physio as possible. He had made enough progress to be let out for a day and spent Christmas Day at home."

In all, Paul spent 11 weeks in the John Radcliffe, and Sheryl was there for almost all of that period, staying in local hotels.

Now he is in Cardiff, she spends a great deal of time at his bedside, so the other family members have had to

step up and keep the businesses running.

Joel and his sister Stacey are running Strawberry Fields, while Stacey, along with members of staff, is running Sweet Occasions when her mother is in Cardiff.

One thing that has kept them all going has been the good wishes and support of customers. Sheryl said: "We have been inundated with get well cards, and people are always calling in to wish Paul well."

"Some customers have even called in to see him in hospital."

Sheryl and Paul met when she was 16, and seven years later they were married.

This year, their 34th year as a married couple, has been very different, and the whole family has had to pull together.

However, Sheryl says that Paul is determined to make as full a recovery as possible – and there will be no shortage of customers waiting to welcome him back!

Adventurer Maria claims world record

VALE adventurer Maria Leijerstam has become the first person to cycle to the South Pole from the edge of the continent in 10 days, beating all other speed records.

"Her success was down to meticulous planning, super fitness, both physically and mentally, and pure determination," said her mother, Adrianne Leijerstam.

"From the time she was 12 years old and announced she wanted to be an astronaut, Maria has always been an adventurer. We are thrilled she has made it in such good time."

Maria (35) a former management consultant, who now runs Multisport Wales, describes Antarctica as "vicious". Her journey has not been without its problems.

At one point, the sweat on the inside of her boots froze at minus 35 degrees and each rest time she struggled to erect her tent in howling winds.

For 10 days, she heated her freeze-dried food by melting snow on a small Primus stove in her tent.



Maria Leijerstam.

Snow drifts, complete white-outs and crevasses marred her passage, but even so, she was able to cycle the whole distance on her three-wheeled PolarCycleTM.

A two-year planning and development programme by the White Ice Cycle team produced a unique cycle design that was then manufactured by Inspired Cycle Engineering of Cornwall.

Roald Amundsen was the first person to reach the South Pole in 1911 using two-metre long skis which made crevasse crossing easier for him.

He was five weeks ahead of a British party led by Robert Falcon Scott, as part of the Terra Nova Expedition.

Amundsen and his team returned safely to their base, and later learned that Scott and his four companions had died on their return journey.

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Blwyddyn newydd afiaith Sant Baruc

OS ydych yn gyn ddisgybl yn Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Baruc, cofiwch ymuno gyda ni yn ein grŵp AFIATH (Dyddiadau isod).

Rydym yn cwrd yn fisol yn y Mount Sorrel. Mae'n gyfle gwyb i ail-gydio yn yr iaith ac i ail-gysylltu â hen ffriidiau - Aduniad Ysgol rheolaidd. Ac adduned blwyddyn newydd perffaith!

Peidiwch â phoeni o gwbl os nag ydych wedi siarad Cymraeg ers ydyddiau ysgol, cewch eich synnu pa mor gyflym y daw y cwbl yn ôl. Mae wir yn brofiad hyfryd i ddal i fyny gyda phawb. Wir yr!

Edrychwn ymlaen at ffwyddyn newydd yng nghwmni hen wynebau!

Dyddiadau, Dechrau yn 8pm, Nos Wener Ionawr 10/ January 10; Nos Wener Chwefror 7/February 7; Nos Wener Chwefror 28/February 28 - dathlu penblwydd yn UN oed!

EX-PUPILS of Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Baruc are invited to meetings of AFIATH in the Mount Sorrel Hotel.

AFIATH is a group for ex-pupils which was

formed in March 2013 - a Welsh version of Friends Reunited. It is an excellent way of re-engaging with the Welsh language and catching up with old (and new) friends.

The group has been very well supported and is going from strength to strength. In true Sant Baruc style, a choir of 40-strong went carol singing just before Christmas in King's Square. We collected over £200 for the Breast Centre Clinic in Llandough Hospital.

Our meetings at 8pm on January 10, February 7 and February 28, are totally informal and we can guarantee a good night out!

Don't worry if your Welsh is a bit rusty - it will all come flooding back!

If you now have children yourselves and they are pupils in any of the Welsh schools in Barry, imagine how much more confident you will be to help them with their education!

Dulyn Griffith a Gwenno Huws

Gardens' first Trust anniversary

D Y F F R Y N Gardens in the Vale celebrated its first year with the National Trust on Saturday, January 4.

"The first year has seen fantastic visitor numbers, with over 60,000 people visiting in 2013. Visitors have enjoyed wonderful displays of colour in the herbaceous borders, they've taken part in events like the Family Fun weekend and the bronze statues of the wind and rain gods have moved to their new home

in the glasshouse," said Gwenno Mair Griffith, Visitor Experience Manager.

"Dyffryn House is celebrating a successful first nine months with its doors open, over 39,000 people enjoyed a visit to the house and this for the first time for 20 years."

"We're all very proud of our achievements in the first year with the National Trust, especially since over 60,000 people chose to visit us. We're looking forward to another year full of events and developments in the gardens," said Gerry Donovan, General Manager.

Notice of Offer

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SPECIAL VALEPLUS PRESENTATION



VALEPLUS, the local charity that provides lifelong learning and leisure opportunities for people with a learning disability, recently presented certificates to some of its members who were successful in their ASDAN Employability courses.

Course tutor Mair Venables said: "This qualification is the culmination of many months of hard work

and training undertaken in ValePlus' retail training project, Nova, which is based in High Street, Barry."

Melanie Carter, director of ValePlus, added her congratulations to the group and wished them well with their future studies.

Pictured receiving their certificates from Deputy Town Mayor of Llantwit Major, Coun Nick Mason and Penarth Town Mayor, Coun Neil Thomas, are Helen Pocock, Sarah Poole and Sonja Pederson with Mair Venables, course tutor.

THE TWO FACES OF NATURE



The scene at Dunraven.



Sunrise.

LOCAL photographer ANDREW FOYLE captured the extremes of recent weather.

On Saturday, January 4, Dunraven Bay was carpeted with rocks and boulders after an overnight pounding from the waves.

The next morning the sky over Stalling Down produced a beautiful sunrise.

Organ donation campaign

A CAMPAIGN is being launched in support of soft opt-out organ donation in Wales.

New legislation comes into force on December 1, 2015, hoping to achieve an increase in the number of organ donors with a new opt-out system for consent. An individual will be deemed to be a donor by either registering a decision to opt in, or by doing nothing at all.

By doing nothing, it will be as if you have no objection to being a donor, and an individual will be treated in the same way as if they had chosen to be a donor. If an individual doesn't want to be a donor, they can register a decision to opt-out.

Mark Drakeford AM, Welsh Government Health Minister, said: "In Wales, over 250 lives are 'on a clock' waiting for an organ donor, living in

the hope that time does not run out for them and a donor is found.

"We are changing the law on organ donation in Wales to help people on the donor waiting list by increasing the number of organs available for transplant.

"The 'It's About Time' campaign aims to give clear information about the change in the law and what it means for all of us. It will feature everyday people who are waiting for transplants - except that there is something noticeably different about them - they have a digital clock, as part of their body, which is counting down their life.

"I hope when people see the campaign online or, over coming months, on radio, newspapers and television, they will take a look at our website, think about their organ donation decision and discuss it with family and friends."

THE current Welsh Government review of how Wales is governed has prompted one local community council to call for a big reduction in the size of government.

Colwinston Community Council has fired off a strongly-worded response, which says that there are too many AMs, MPs and borough councillors.

In the council's response, the respective systems in Wales and Scotland are compared, and The GEM thinks that readers will be interested in the arguments put forward in the letter - extracts from which are published below.

WE refer to the Electoral Reviews Programme 2014 that was circulated some weeks ago.

This council wishes to take issue with some of the assumptions made when deciding the factors to be used in the consideration of a programme of reviews in Wales. We wish to point out some anomalies that should be addressed.

Firstly, Wales suffers from a significant level of over-representation. There are 40 members of Parliament, 60 Assembly members and 22 local authorities for a population of approximately 3,100,000 people (2011).

This comes at a cost to the public purse. While the Assembly does not have powers to change the Parliamentary or Assembly representation, it does have the power to tackle the gross over-representation of local councils and councillors.

Wales has more local councillors in the 22 authorities than Scotland, whose population is approximately 5,292,400 (2011 census).

Scotland has 1,223 councillors, with an average of one councillor for 4,327 people. In Wales there are 1,254 councillors over the 22 local authorities, providing one councillor for 2,472 people.

Secondly, the present set-up is expensive. Each councillor in Wales is paid a minimum of £13,175 and if account is then taken of the addi-

Colwinston statement

tional allowances that are paid for committee chairs etc, this could rise to at least £17,000 pa.

Reducing the number of councils and councillors would save the public purse a minimum of £7,088,150 and possibly at least £9,146,000 each year.

Community and town councillors are not paid (but can claim expenses).

The consequence of having 22 authorities is an enormous cost for providing public services. Figures published in May 2013 showed 56 council employees in Wales taking home salaries of more than £100,000 in 2011/12.

Also, more than 50 chief officers from councils across Wales took home salaries of at least £100,000 in 2011/12.

The salaries covered a range of titles, from chief executives to directors responsible for departments like education, social services, regeneration and the environment.

The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 has received Royal Assent and the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, has said: "Through our ambitious five-year leg-

islative programme, we are introducing 'made in Wales' solutions to the issues affecting us as a nation. This Act represents a further step in our drive to ensure local democracy in Wales operates as efficiently and effectively as possible."

However, nothing is said or presumably planned which will address the obvious problem. There are simply too many local authorities in Wales which are costing a fortune to run.

There is a significant knock-on effect to the public purse as a result of the large local government bureaucracy; in Wales the average band D council tax for 2013 - 14 is £1,226.

The Daily Telegraph reported on December 4, 2013, that Hammersmith and Fulham Council, through improvements to how their services are delivered, are setting next year's band D tax at £735.

It would appear that the perceived wisdom is that the Assembly will continue in its present form with ever-increasing costs that are excused as it accumulates even more powers.

In challenging financial circumstances tough decisions must be taken and under the Conservative-led coalition's approach, is starting to reap dividends, with strong signs that an economic recovery is under way - unemployment is down, we have record-low interest rates, and millions of low-paid workers have been lifted out of paying income tax altogether.

He lists a number of services that his council has decimated since coming to power in 2012 and seeks to lay the blame at Westminster's door.

But the Vale Council's budget is set by the Welsh Government and it is

This will mean even fewer funds for service delivery as central government is understandably reluctant to write Wales a blank cheque. This goes unchallenged at present.

Therefore, we propose that as well as local authorities, the Assembly should reduce costs significantly, at least in line with the reductions in Whitehall numbers.

Finally, we would like to suggest that what is actually required is a root and branch review to make radical cuts to the present bureaucracy of local government.

If a reduction of the number of councillors is equivalent to a 40 per cent saving, it should be possible to substantially reduce local government costs in a similar way.

This will free up revenue which any future Welsh Government can use to reinvest as additional capital to improve the overall delivery of services in Wales.

We ask you therefore to reconsider your review programme and focus on achieving significant savings for the benefit of the people of Wales.

JANE MOTTE, (Clerk to Colwinston Community Council).

'STRONG SIGNS OF AN ECONOMIC RECOVERY'

PERHAPS Coun Curtis is familiar with George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984, for he is clearly familiar with the art of 'doublespeak' (GEM letters, last week).

If the blame for cuts to local services lies with the UK Government, as he claims, then it is his Labour colleagues who between 1997 and 2010 led us deep into the economic pit from which we are finally freeing ourselves.

In challenging financial circumstances tough decisions must be taken and under the Conservative-led coalition's approach, is starting to reap dividends, with strong signs that an economic recovery is under way - unemployment is down, we have record-low interest rates, and millions of low-paid workers have been lifted out of paying income tax altogether.

He lists a number of services that his council has decimated since coming to power in 2012 and seeks to lay the blame at Westminster's door.

But the Vale Council's budget is set by the Welsh Government and it is

local Labour AM Jane Hutt who signs the cheques as Finance Minister.

Instead of supporting these local services, priorities have included: spending £52 million on an airport, £17.5 million refurbishing their various offices, and over £100,000 on pot-ted plants.

It is no good Coun Curtis hiding behind a transparently pathetic blame game. Instead, he should spend his time trying to understand how Barry recently lost its regeneration status under his council's stewardship; why his council failed to prepare for changes to transport funding that have left many residents completely isolated and without bus routes.

Or, why he thinks it's okay to publicly lament the loss of vital public services, when his own Labour council found almost £250,000 to redecorate the council chambers with posh new leather seats.

Coun Curtis, it doesn't matter how many times you claim that "two + two = five", it's not 1984 anymore and no one believes you.

ANDREW RT DAVIES AM, (Leader, Welsh Conservatives).

VALE MP's VIEWPOINT 'Freeze the Council Tax bill'

THERE have been significant increases in council taxes over recent years that are unacceptable. As I write this column, I am waiting to hear the latest planned increase for us here in the Vale.

With the expectation of bad news, I am calling on them to support my 'Freeze the Bill campaign - the Council Tax Bill'.

Last year, the Vale of Glamorgan had the largest band D percentage increase of five per cent, when Cardiff Council saw a freeze in their bills. The increase by the Vale Council and Welsh Government has put our rises at the top of the league in Wales, with a Welsh average of 2.9 per cent.

The average band D council tax for Wales for

2013-14 is £1,226 and the figures vary from £974 in Pembrokeshire to £1,526 in Blaenau Gwent.

The UK Government has broadly frozen council tax rises in England over the last three years, setting aside extra money to help keep bills down. The same money was handed over to the Welsh Government, but they decided to prioritise other issues instead.

My political opponents call regularly for more support to help with the cost of living. Freezing council tax rates could do this - and the power is in their hands. The background to the increases relate to the way in which the Vale is taken for granted by the Welsh Government and by some of our local councillors. It seems that the Vale is seen as a soft touch.

Last year, the Vale received £202 less per person

from the Welsh Government than Cardiff Council.

If we received the same per person funding from the Welsh Government as Cardiff, we would have an additional £25m to spend every year - or to use to reduce our Council Tax bill. Bridgend receives £226 extra per person from the Assembly, and Rhondda Cynon Taff receives £409 extra per head.

Last year, I called on all residents to get behind the campaign for Fair Funding for the Vale. The petition is still available on my web site www.alun-cairns.co.uk. I am hoping it will strengthen the Vale Council's hand in its negotiations with the Welsh Government.

We need to do all possible to influence Welsh Ministers. After all, 80 per cent of Welsh Council funding comes from the Assembly Government and our levels of council tax are dependent on it.



Vale MP
Alun Cairns
reports to
GEM readers

'Abolish the role of Vale mayor!' - CALL BY COUNCILLOR

A BARRY councillor has called for the role of the mayor to be scrapped in the Vale - to cut costs.

Independent Vale councillor Richard Bertin spoke out after hearing the authority is aiming to save millions of pounds next year.

"If we're in a situation where jobs are at risk, we have to look at losing luxuries before we lose jobs and services. Not only do I support the proposal, but the independent group's suggestion is

that we invite an investigation into losing the role and cost of the mayor completely.

"I have a great deal of respect for anyone who has held that office, but the total costs of the mayorality is in the region of thousands; but this is now a luxury that we can now ill-afford, and therefore it should now be axed."

The Vale Mayor gets an annual allowance on top of other allowances of around £10,000 per year plus a PA, car and chauffeur. On top of this,

an average of around £15,000 per year is then spent on food and drink by the mayor. Savings would be achieved by reducing the costs of ceremonial events such as mayor-making and abandoning town twinning arrangements.

Barry PACT BUTTRILLS PACT is at the Philip John Community Room, Barry Library on Thursday, January 9 at 6.30pm.

DYFAN PACT at Buttrills Community Centre on Sunday, January 12 at 7pm.

COURT PACT at the Chilcott Room, Barry YMCA, Court Road on Thursday, January 16 at 6pm.

Penarth PACT STANWELL PACT at Glyndwr Hall, Glyndwr Road, on Friday, January 10 at 7pm.

St AUGUSTINES PACT at the Windsor Arms public house on Wednesday, January 29 at 7pm.

Wear a pin for Marie Curie

MARIE CURIE Cancer Care is appealing to residents to donate an hour of their time in February and March to collect for the charity's annual Great Daffodil Appeal.

The charity needs volunteer collectors to encourage people to purchase the familiar daffodil pin.

The money raised will help Marie Curie Nurses to provide more free care to local people with terminal illnesses in their own homes.

Contact www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil for full information.

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VALE OUTPERFORMS BRIDGEND WHEN IT COMES TO RIDING OUT THE RECESSION

THE stereotype of a prosperous Vale of Glamorgan and a more cash-strapped Bridgend county borough has been reinforced by figures released by the GMB union.

The figures show that while residents in the Vale have seen their wages rise broadly in line with inflation over the last five years, Bridgend workers have actually fallen!

In real terms, allowing for inflation, it

REPORT by PHILIP IRWIN

means that Vale workers are 1.6 per cent worse off than five years ago – while Bridgend county borough workers are 20.1 per cent down.

The GMB survey covers the period from April 2008 to November 2013, and is the result of analysing official earnings data.

The figures show that in April 2008, average earnings in the Vale were £23,878, while in Bridgend the figure was slightly lower, at

£22,714.

However, by November 2013, that gap has become much bigger. Vale workers now earn an average annual salary of £27,736 (up by 16.2 per cent) while in Bridgend county borough, workers' take home pay has fallen to £22,193 (a fall of 2.3 per cent).

Although Vale workers have seen wages rise by 16.2 per cent, the GMB says that, once adjusted for inflation,

they are 1.6 per cent worse off. Similarly, Bridgend's fall works out at 20.1 per cent.

In the Welsh league table compiled by the GMB, the Vale has done best, while Bridgend has done the worst.

Other areas that have been hit hard are Pembrokeshire (19.4 per cent down after inflation), Swansea (17.1) and Cardiff (15.5 per cent).

The source for the GMB's data was the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

John Philips, GMB Wales secretary, said "These alarming figures show how hard pressed working people across the UK are struggling to pay their bills after years of wage decline and attacks on the living standards of families throughout the land."

"Working people deserve and need a decent pay rise to halt the drop in living standards."

VWBN marks notable decade

TO celebrate over a decade of evening networking in the Vale of Glamorgan and beyond, the Vale Women's Business Network (VWBN) is launching a monthly coffee morning aimed at all women business owners, including both retired and those aspiring to set up in business.

A spokeswoman said: "The idea of the morning is to have a social event to help to establish new relationships and help one another to build businesses in the local community."

"All women are welcome to drop in and have a coffee and a chat with other women in business. We look forward to meeting mums following the school drop off, shop owners before they open up, and any other women who are interested."

"We plan to move the monthly event to venues across the Vale."

"To make it easier to relax and talk, this will be a women-only event without children."

For further information, contact Rebecca at members@vwbn.org.uk.

The Older People's champion looks back on roadshow

THE Older People's Commissioner for Wales and her team met a total of 400 people at 13 events in Bridgend and the Vale last year.

The visits formed part of the Commissioner's Engagement Roadshow, which saw a total of 5,400 people at 180 events across Wales.

Commissioner Sarah Rochira and her team travelled over 25,000 miles across the country in 2013, which included visits to groups, organisations and individuals across Bridgend and the Vale.

Engagement events in Bridgend county borough have included the opening of a reablement unit in the town that offers treatments to help people live more independently.

They also met members of Maesteg, Kenfig Hill and Bridgend Shout, and visited the Bridgend Carers' Centre, on Park Street, Bridgend.

On December 19, the Commissioner talked to 20 members of Kenfig Hill Shout at Llys Ton about local issues that matter to them. The Engagement was arranged with chairman Stan Rumble, who passed away earlier this year.

She said: "I had been keen to come back and meet Stan again as he made a real impression on me when I met him at the Bridgend Shout event. He was not only a true friend to many, but also a steadfast shoulder to lean on."

"He fought to give you a voice and was the type of person you want to be in the company of. The

world needs more people like Stan and he will be truly missed."

In the Vale, they visited the Senior Health Shop and the Friends and Neighbours strawberry cream tea at Beryl Road Pioneer Hall in Barry.

The Commissioner attended the One Voice Wales area committee meeting in Cowbridge in July and Vale of Glamorgan Older People's Forum in September, describing her role and her work to make Wales "a good place to grow older".

In September, members of her team also met Barry Open Door group to discuss transport issues in the town and in October, she officially opened a new mental health unit at University Hospital Llandough.

Sarah said: "My Engagement Roadshow, which has visited communities across Wales, has allowed older people to share information with me about their experiences, the things that matter most to them and the things that worry them most about growing older in Wales."

"One of the key concerns older people in Bridgend and the Vale have shared with me is the cuts to local bus routes, which leave people lonely and isolated. The closure of public toilets, a vital community resource, is also something that many older people in the area have told me they are worried about."

"It is important, even in these difficult financial times, not to lose sight of the vital role services such as these services can play in helping people to get out and about, stay engaged with their local communities, and maintain their independence."

Honoured for helping to save children's lives

TWO long-serving supporters of child health services in the Vale and Cardiff were recognised in the New Year's Honours.

Noah's Ark Appeal chair Lyn Jones received an OBE for his services to the Children's Hospital for Wales and University Hospital of Wales.

Neonatal intensive care unit supporter Joan Marshall was awarded a British Empire Medal for charitable services to the unit.

Adam Cairns, the UHB's chief

executive, welcomed the honours and said the pair had helped save young lives from across Wales.

He said: "On behalf of everyone at the health board, I would like to congratulate both Lyn and Joan on their richly-deserved honours. Their work has touched and improved so many lives."

"We are very lucky to have their continued support for which I'm sure everyone at Cardiff and Vale is extremely grateful. Their commitment and dedication to helping others is a real inspiration."

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CARDIFF AIRPORT'S 'GOOD NEWS' AS LOST ROUTES ARE REPLACED

C A R D I F F AIRPORT was rarely out of the news in the run-up to Christmas, as bad news about losing the budget airline Flybe was followed by better news – with the arrival of new routes, writes **PHILIP IRWIN**.

On top of that, the Welsh Conservative Leader Andrew RT Davies, was scathing about news that the Welsh Government had funded a £10 million loan.

The good news came when the airport announced that CityJet, part of the Air France airline group, will operate Glasgow and Paris (Orly) routes from January 20 –

the same routes dropped by Flybe. An airport spokeswoman described this as a "seamless transition for these vital services from the Welsh capital".

CityJet's initial schedule will offer a twice daily weekday service to Glasgow with daily weekend flights. Paris will be served by a daily flight Monday to Friday, and on Sundays.

From the start of the summer schedule on March 30, flights to Edinburgh and Jersey will be added. Edinburgh will be served three times a day, Monday to Friday with one flight on Saturdays and two on Sundays.

Jersey will be served with five weekly return flights. The summer schedule will also see a third daily flight added to the Glasgow route on

Thursdays and Fridays while Paris (Orly) will then be served every day of the week.

By the middle of summer, CityJet will be operating more than 80 flights a week in and out of Cardiff Airport.

Christine Ourmières, CityJet's chief executive, said: "We are confident that our network and schedule to these four new destinations will be a success – both for the Welsh community and for CityJet."

Cardiff Airport's chief executive, Jon Horne, said: "This is fantastic news and I'm delighted CityJet has responded so quickly to pick up these vitally important routes from Cardiff Airport."

"It is always good to welcome a new airline to Cardiff; in CityJet's case it's really great, given the scale of the commitment they have made to the airport and to Wales."

Commenting on the announcement, Cardiff Airport's chairman, Lord Rowe-Beddoe, said: "This is excellent news. I am proud that the management team has succeeded in securing a new airline to fill the breach left by Flybe."

"The speed with which this has been achieved is testament to management's commitment to ensuring the airport's success."

However, the Leader of the Welsh Conservatives, Andrew RT Davies, was still concerned.

Commenting on the confirmation of a £10 million Welsh Government loan for the airport – following its initial "nationalisation" for £52 million earlier this year, the regional AM said: "The recent purchase by the Scottish Government of Prestwick Airport for one pound, puts the Welsh Government's £52 million acquisition of Cardiff Airport in sharp focus."

"In the interim, there is little to suggest any marked improvement in performance, and nothing to justify Labour's claims that the airport is now worth more than when they bought it."

"Frontline services continue to suffer and yet another £10 million in loans has somehow been found by Labour ministers already imposing record-breaking NHS budget cuts. You couldn't make it up."

"We all want to see the airport succeed and part of that process will involve improving the experience for passengers using the site."

"However, what concerns me most as a Vale resident is the fact that the Labour Welsh

Government can rustle up £10 million to pay for this, whilst the NHS and rural bus services are being cut back altogether."

There was, however, further good news for the airport when Europe's largest airline group announced it was launching a low-cost route to Dusseldorf, starting in spring 2014, while the luxury Caribbean tour operator, Sandals, is introducing its first Barbados flight from Wales.

Germanwings, owned by the Lufthansa Group,

will start weekly Dusseldorf flights on April 5. An airport spokeswoman said: "The route is an important strand of the strategy to bring more tourists to Wales, and the airport team has worked closely with Visit Wales, the Welsh Government tourism body, to secure it".

The two-week Sandals flight to Barbados departs in March. In addition, P&O Cruises' new chartered flights to Barbados from Cardiff Airport in January and February 2014 sold out

in just a matter of weeks after being launched earlier this year.

Vueling's winter programme has been expanded from Cardiff, with additional flights to Malaga and Alicante, operating all year round, and Flybe's have added ski flights to Chambéry, Lyon, Grenoble and Geneva.

Cardiff Airport chief executive, Jon Horne, said the developments are encouraging:

"The ongoing success we have in attracting new services means the hard work of the team here is

paying off. It is also encouraging that airlines and tour operators are making these commitments to Cardiff Airport and Wales, and this gives us confidence that we are on track to achieve our longer-term goals."

Then, on Monday, January 6, Air Malta announced that it was adding an extra four departures as a prelude to its summer 2014 charter season. The direct flights from Cardiff Airport to Malta are programmed to depart every Tuesday through to October 21.

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Branch Manager Phil Powell feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although

that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service the Vale, Bridgend, RCT and Porthcawl areas and Phil is finding that his

approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've

done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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Out and About with The GEM

WHAT'S ON IN YOUR AREA

Lib-Dem surgery

Regional Lib-Dem AM for South Wales Central, Eluned Parrott, will hold an advice surgery at Morrisons Supermarket, Penny Way, Barry, between 1pm and 2pm, tomorrow (Friday, January 10).

Residents who have any issues of concern to them or their local community, are encouraged to pop along.

No appointment is necessary.

Vale AM's surgery

THE Vale AM, Jane Hutt, will be holding a surgery on Saturday (January 11) from 10am to 12 noon at Barry CAB office, 119 Broad Street, Barry.

Toys and trains

CARDIFF Toy and Train Sale will be held this Saturday, January 11, at 10.30am in Penarth Leisure Centre, Andrew Road, Cogan.

This will be the first event at Cogan in 2014 with others following in April, July and October.

Organizer Chris Dyer said: "We now offer some 100 tables operated by over 40 traders from all over Wales and England - with the stock on offer, old and new, being unbeatable."

"The show is now firmly established as the leading such event in the Principality."

Telephone 01643 702757 and 07966 694579, website: www.chrisdyerfairs.co.uk for further details.

Councillors' surgery

DYFAN Labour councillors Claire Curtis and Anthony Powell will be holding a drop-in advice surgery for residents of Dyfan Ward on Saturday, January 11, at the Buttrills Community

Centre, North Walk, Barry.

The surgery will run from 11am to 12pm.

If any residents have an issue they would like to discuss with the councillors, go along, as no appointment is necessary.

Dinas Powys History Society

THE next meeting of the Dinas Powys Local History Society will be held on Tuesday, January 14, in Kynance Hall.

There will be a talk by Mr Don Llewellyn on 'Penttyrch and the Garth Mountain'.

An entrance fee of £3 for non-members and £1.50 for members will be charged.

All are very welcome to attend. BW

Church service

A SERVICE will be held at St Hilary

Church at 6.30pm on Sunday, January 12 to rededicate the restored west window and to thank the village and all others involved for their help and support. It will be conducted by the Archbishop of Wales, Dr Barry Morgan, followed by refreshments in the village hall.

Bridgend WI meeting

THE correct date for this month's meeting of Bridgend WI is January 21, and not as previously stated.

They meet at Hope Baptist church hall on the third Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm and visitors are welcome.

Telephone 01656 653085, or 01656 857818 for further details.

Top rally rider Stan to tell all at Pontyclun!

ONE of Britain's most successful rally motorcyclists is to give a talk about his adventures on four continents at Pontyclun Rugby Club on Friday, January 24.

Stan Watt has taken part in three editions of the Dakar rally, finishing a commendable 25th overall in last year's event in South America.

He took a top-ten place in this year's Safari Rally of Australasia, and has scored numerous successes in African rallies, as well as cross-country and endurance events in the UK.

Stan will bring two racing motorcycles and a rally truck to the rugby club, where the doors will open at 7.30pm.

Admission to the evening is £5. Proceeds will be divided between Air Ambulance Wales and the talk's organisers, the Trail Riders Fellowship.

To prebook tickets, contact richardsimpson94@yahoo.co.uk or call 07812 40201.

Ty Hafan winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D807.

● £2,000: 447054.

● The rollover, which now stands at £2,000 was not won this week.

● £10: 2 8 4 8 5 8, 402065, 723300, 701604, 728248, 445294, 6 6 5 0 6 8, 8 5 9 8 3 3, 848933, 376899, 298156, 409149, 894339, 635648, 374451, 254364, 196019, 760087, 402844.

● £5: 663657, 567723, 274948, 754790, 162862, 610324, 649369, 742078, 746676, 556583, 292818, 247422, 114845, 266757, 683402, 781562, 453453, 220298, 503682, 490459, 290543, 568655, 814872, 505051, 868212, 519145, 658298, 689274, 831444, 345452, 368563, 730443, 463055, 735148, 540131, 852567, 522516, 322843, 478548, 806698, 699986, 225745, 892420, 491572, 346847, 886833, 857279, 463733, 215760, 539576, 707702, 575039, 138316, 592782, 628095, 396409, 693434, 170366, 793982, 644475.

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D808.

D808.

● £2,000: 179756, Tonypany.

● The rollover, which now stands at £2,500, was not won this week.

● £10: 757650, 358265, 767762, 707844, 549560, 706440, 371840, 286949, 505333, 973859, 475335, 523213, 842411, 701399, 526489, 159855, 439206, 314967, 194926, 591335.

● £5: 797444, 201045, 144143, 131310, 832567, 290165, 833193, 306274, 528674, 387694, 845458, 325866, 933055, 983691, 459861, 234593, 194835, 185872, 617068, 740294, 497470, 162499, 485358, 563277, 519004, 393024, 165196, 638781, 297681, 196814, 570717, 248212, 449993, 706191, 489933, 194669, 326524, 396569, 630656, 668308, 971743, 523958, 883327, 229590, 277157, 749425, 348878, 750243, 291978, 138868, 264425, 520492, 654541, 590868, 306225, 421717, 699524, 428675, 742154, 375888.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please telephone 029 2053 2300.

NOTE CHANGE OF DATE CARDIFF TOY & TRAIN SALE

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Penarth 9.30am & 11.30am
All Saints Church Hall
Victoria Square
Tracy - 07894 275853

Penarth 5.30pm & 7.30pm
All Saints Church Hall
Victoria Square
Tracy - 07894 275853

THURSDAY
Cowbridge - 9.30am
Gibbonsdown Community Centre
Rob - 07708941279

Barry - 5.30pm
Highlight Park Community Centre, Barry
Annmarie - 01446 736534

Dinas Powys 5.30pm & 7.30pm
The Cabin by swimming pool, Hebron Hall
Nicky - 07703313619

Barry - 10.15am
St Helen's Church Hall
Wyndham Street
Niki - 01446 740394

FRIDAY
Dinas Powys 9.30am
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Nicky - 07703313619

TUESDAY
Barry - 5.30pm
Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, Trinity Street
Joanne - 01446 404897

Llantwit Major 9.30am
Catholic Church, Ham Lane East
Helen - 01446 750738

Barry 7.30pm
Gibbonsdown Community Centre
Nicky - 07703313619

Llantwit Major 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Our Lady & St Iltyd Church (Catholic)
Ham Lane East
Helen - 01446 750738

Sully - 6.30pm
The Old School South Road
Niki - 01446 740394

WEDNESDAY
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Annmarie - 01446 736534

NEW GROUP From Saturday 4th January
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Wiggy - 07970 450694

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
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Participants must be 14 years of age or over

**THE GEM/FERRIS
Entertainment
Performance
Scholarship is a
New Year tradition
in the Vale and
Bridgend which is
celebrating its sev-
enth year.**

Last year marked the 10th anniversary of Peter Ferris launching his acting masterclasses locally, and the arrival of Ferris Entertainment in Wales.

Peter captured the interest of the film world last year, due his innovative approach to creating half hour movies. Over the past two years, he has devised a way of shooting 30-minute films in just two days, using a combination of conventional cameras and smart-phones.

His knowledge is much in demand and he hosted workshops at the 'Marbella International Film Festival' in Spain, and the 'South By South West Eco Film Festival' in Austin, USA.

But Peter has always had a vocation for passing on acting skills - hence the screen acting masterclasses.

He explained: "GEM



ABOVE: Peter with Fiona Johnson at the Marbella International Film Festival.

readers have a chance of winning a scholarship by attending the GEM/Ferris Entertainment free masterclass on the January 18 from 2pm-5pm at Mount Sorrel Hotel, Porthkerry Road, Barry, CF62 7XY.

"All you have to do is bring along the voucher from the GEM.

"One male and one female will be chosen to win the three weekend masterclass scholarship being held one weekend a month in February, March and April.

"We are unique in that most screen acting masterclasses only teach you 'screen acting' but with the Ferris Entertainment

Screen Acting Masterclasses, the bonus is you also make a film which will be entered into international film festivals. It will get you an IMDB credit and then be shown on www.Ferrisentertainment.tv."

It means those attending the classes learn to perform in front of the cameras.

Peter said: "Over the past 11 years people have attempted to compete with us and our style of courses, but we are never 'out innovated'."

Anyone over the age of 14, including adults, can attend. In the past, Peter has helped to retrain people for a career in the entertainment industry.

He added: "If you ever dreamed of a career in film and TV then take the first or the next step by coming along to the free masterclass.

"If you reach the required standard, you may be invited to join FEA Management, the Ferris agency which will put you forward to film and TV roles.

"We cannot thank the Glamorgan GEM enough for its support over the years, and we really look forward to meeting you at the free masterclass at Mount Sorrell hotel on January 18."

For any further information on the Wales' Masterclass and masterclasses held internationally visit www.ferrisentertainment.com contact Ferris Entertainment on 07801 493 133, or via email info@ferrisentertainment.com

DAFYDD'S ENDURANCE TESTS RAISE £1,000 FOR CHARITY

**A DETERMINED
Cancer Research
Wales supporter
from Bridgend,
completed seven
gruelling athletic
challenges over the
course of 2013, to
raise £1,000 for the
charity.**

Dafydd Owen (43) ran, swam, cycled and struggled almost 160km in a series of extreme races last year and the father of four said:

"Before this, the furthest I'd ever run was the Cardiff Half Marathon, and I only managed that once - but I'm never one to back away from a challenge!"

"Cancer has affected many of my family and friends, so I wanted to do something huge to raise as much money as possible for such a worthy cause."

On March 17, Dafydd took on the Rock Solid Race at Escot Park in Exeter. Within the 10km race format were 37 obstacles, from water and mud to eight foot walls and even fire.

Dafydd commented: "There was more mud than I ever want to see again. It was testing, but I passed!"

That challenge paled in comparison to the Fisherman's Friend Strongman Run on May 4, which saw Dafydd travel to Nürburg, Cologne. Described as 'the mother of all obstacle courses', the 22.5km route features ice pools, mud tunnels and electric fences.

Having completed the Strongman Run in three hours and 41 minutes, Dafydd commented: "I heard swear words from each of the 53 European nations represented; it was quite an education."

Dafydd undertook his first triathlon on May 19. The Llanelli Sprint Triathlon involves a 750m swim, 30km bike ride and 5km run, which Dafydd completed in just under two hours.

Dafydd said: "I'd never done a triathlon before; I don't even own a road bike!"

"It seemed to go on forever, but as I approached the finish line, I saw my wife and youngest kids, and my eight-year-old ran alongside me for the last 10 metres, which really spurred me on."

Then, on July 29,



ABOVE: Dafydd during the Triathlon.

Dafydd travelled to London for the world's biggest triathlon. In three hours and 22 minutes, he completed a 1.5km swim in the Royal Victoria Dock, a 40km cycle along the north bank of the Thames and a 10km run.

Dafydd commented: "I was so tired by the end that I'm not sure what happened - but I definitely finished. I have the photo to prove it."

His next race was the infamous Tough Mudder on September 21. Held at Glamusk estate near Crickhowell in mid Wales, the relentless 19km course features 14 obstacles involving mud, 10ft walls, icy water and barbed wire.

Dafydd reported: "Some of the obstacles were really nasty. The Electric Eel dished out some strong shocks and the Mud Mile did what it said on the tin, but the worst for me was the Cage Crawl: a 60ft ditch filled with water, with mesh just a few inches above the surface."

Having only just recovered from this challenge, on September 29, Dafydd took on the Men's Health Survival of the Fittest race, a 10km urban assault course running right through Cardiff.

He said: "Survival of the Fittest was my first obstacle race back in 2010, and has a special place in my heart as a result. Compared to Tough Mudder or Strongman, it wasn't a huge physical test - the

obstacles are largely pedestrians and scaffolding as you run through the city!"

Dafydd completed his final challenge on December 15, when he took part in the annual Christmas Pudding Race in Bridgend.

The 10km multi-terrain run around Merthyr Mawr is the brainchild of former Olympic marathoner Steve Brace.

After an amazing year of athletic challenges and determined fundraising, Dafydd hit his £1,000 fundraising target and is planning to run the Snowdonia Marathon for Cancer Research Wales this year.

Cancer Research Wales fundraiser Mei Lewis said: "Sadly, as Dafydd has experienced, cancer affects so many people - not just the patient but their family and friends too."

"Thanks to amazing supporters like Dafydd and the generosity of his sponsors, we can fund groundbreaking, potentially life-saving research and work to reduce the impact of this terrible disease on everyone in Wales."

Cancer Research Wales would be grateful to anyone who would like to sponsor Dafydd's year-long fundraising effort.

Donations can be made online at <http://www.justgiving.com/DafyddOwen>.

To read more about Dafydd's journey, visit knowingwhentolaugh.tumblr.com. **LF**

GEM ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

In Business Update

**Don't be SAD,
there are ways
of banishing
the winter blues!**

TWENTY per cent of us in the UK suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) - likend to reduced sunlight over the winter months.

It can make you want to retreat under the duvet. While most of us tire of the cold nights and grey days, SAD can cause extreme symptoms, such as weight change, low mood, apathy, comfort food craving, pessimism, aches and pains, disturbed sleep and lethargy.

But did you know 10-20 minutes daily cardiovascular exercise (a brisk walk) can help stave off SAD symptoms?

There's no need to join a gym - take the stairs, briskly walk with the children to school, or take the dog around the block, it all works fine!

Prevent cravings by balancing nutritionally

rich foods containing protein and healthy fats as well as your five a day.

Have a hug! Shortage of sunlight can cause serotonin to dip, so give your happy chemicals a boost with the 'cuddle hormone' oxytocin. This is released when we feel love, trust and understanding.

Take some time out for you! Time and energy spent on yourself can help improve self-esteem, confidence, energy levels and mood.

Create a positive habit! Harbouring a negative outlook can increase chance of suffering SAD symptoms - so switch it around!

Hypnotherapy can help create positive habits relatively quickly, and so counteract the negative traits of SAD.

If you would like more information about Hypnotherapy, contact Sue Pitman on 07795 964066 or see website www.cardiffhypnotherapysolutions.co.uk.

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Get your bike fit for the New Year!

If your New Year's resolution is to do more exercise, or to get out and about and see the lovely Vale - or even cycling to work - now is a great time to dust off that bike in the shed.

Unfortunately, most bikes after a lay-up will need a bit of TLC.

Vale Cycle Servicing has a full range of spares to return your trusty steed to the road - and with servicing from £30 and discounts for four or more bikes, why not give us a call on 07812033064?

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GEM ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

In Business Update

Prioritising key to coping with post-Christmas rental crisis

JANUARY often leaves people in debt. It is frequently difficult to prioritise the debts that you should be paying first.

It's not always the company that shouts the loudest that should be paid first. A priority payment should always be your rent or mortgage payments to keep you and your family secure.

Landlords may not be receiving their rent and fall into arrears with mortgages of their own. What should you do if you can't pay your rent, or your tenant owes you money?

If you are a landlord, you should contact your tenant as soon as possible and establish if you can come to some sort of payment plan; if not, then you should consider serving a two-week notice.

Plan ahead with PASSMORES...

LAWYERS around Wales and England are running a national 'Make a Lasting Power of Attorney' campaign to encourage all people to plan ahead to avoid problems if they later lose mental capacity.

It means making a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) on the new version of the forms, which came into force in October 2009.

A Lasting Power of Attorney is a legal document that enables one person to make decisions on behalf of another.

There are two types of LPA: financial and welfare. Financial LPAs enable a person to act on behalf of another if, for example, they are ill or disabled and cannot act for themselves.

A welfare LPA enables a person to act

on behalf of another if that person does not have the mental capacity to act for themselves, for example, in the case of a severe stroke.

Without an LPA, it may be necessary for family members to apply to the Court of Protection for authority. This can be a distressing and lengthy process and is far more expensive than making an LPA.

Once all parties have signed the LPA, they must then be registered with the Office of the Public Guardian before they can be used.

Carli Evans of Passmores Solicitors and a member of Solicitors for the Elderly is actively encouraging all people to plan ahead and make Lasting Powers of Attorneys.

People wishing to discuss their requirements should contact Carli Evans to arrange a suitable no obligation appointment on 01446 721000 or by email ce@passmores.com.

PASSMORES

MAKE AN LPA NOW

— Can you afford not to?

Can you imagine a situation where you or a member of your family is no longer able to make decisions? Frightening isn't it?

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is a legal document, that enables one person to make decisions on behalf of another.

Carli Evans, a member of Solicitors for the Elderly is inviting you to attend a no obligation appointment to find out more.

For more information please call:
Carli Evans on 01446 721000
or by email ce@passmores.com.

SOLICITORS FOR THE ELDERLY

21 Tynewydd Road,
Barry, CF62 8HB

If the arrears are not brought up to date after the two weeks, obtain a court order for possession and a judgement for your rent.

Tenants can obtain debt advice locally, or may have a counterclaim (e.g. late deposit registration, disrepair claims or incorrect documentation).

Newbold Solicitors are specialists in landlord and tenant issues; they have a free drop-in advice service and are happy to point you in the right direction.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FAMILY HELP

HOME START Bridgend is a family support charity, which recruits and trains volunteers to help families with children.

Families might be finding it hard to cope for a variety of reasons, illness, disability, post natal depression, mental health problems, isolation, bereavement multiple births or just loneliness.

As a volunteer, you would visit the family once a week for a couple of hours, usually in their own homes. They might just need someone to talk to, or more practical support like meal planning, budgeting or help with finding out about local services such as playgroups.

The only qualifications we require are experience of bringing up children, a friendly caring attitude, understand the pressures of parenting and a non-judgemental attitude.

What will you get from volunteering?

A highly-rated preparation course, a boost to your self-esteem and confidence, or even a foot on the ladder towards a future career.

Classic double bill at Llandarf cinema!

LLANCARTAN Community Cinema is bringing two classic Gothic chillers to the big screen on Friday, January 24, as part of a nationwide season.

The double bill begins with Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940, PG), starring Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine, followed by Stanley Kubrick's haunting masterpiece *The Shining* (1980, 15).

Made 40 years apart, the films share intriguing parallels. Both were directed by ex-pats (Hitchcock made *Rebecca* on first arriving in the US, while Kubrick, a New Yorker, had settled in Britain when he shot *The Shining*).

The films are based on popular novels (by Daphne du Maurier and Stephen King) and both centre their stories on a classic, isolated 'haunted house'.

"This is a unique opportunity to see these great works on the big screen, in historic surroundings," says cinema volunteer Jim Barratt.

"We're debuting our huge new screen and high-definition projector, to deliver the best presentation possible."

'Desperately needing new homes...

MAESTEG Animal Welfare Society needs your help to rehome cats.

In 1985, three people in Maesteg wanted to improve animal welfare and so Maesteg Animal Welfare Society (MAWS) was born.

MAWS is a small charity run entirely by volunteers – most funds are generated from our charity shop in 4, Church Street, Maesteg. Please come to see us if you are in the area (opposite the bus station).

Currently, we have an abundance of cats who are desperately in need of a new family or individual to care for them. We rehome many cats and dogs throughout the valleys, Bridgend and the Vale, and we are desperate for new homes.

We have had to introduce a waiting list before we can take in any more.

Please contact 01656 721496 or 01656 653456 if you can offer a home or any donations, bric-a-brac or any unwanted items.

Cinema returns to St Donats

WE'RE delighted to announce that cinema is returning to St Donats Arts Centre in 2014, with matinee and evening screenings once a month in the Tythe Barn.

The cinema will offer the very latest in digital projection to screen a carefully selected and varied programme of current and classic quality films, including Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln*, showing on Monday, January 27 at 2pm.

Further cinema listings can be found on our website www.stdonats.com. Ticket prices are £4.50 for advance sales and £5.50 on the day.

This project has received funding through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 – 2013 which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

The funding is administered by Creative Rural Communities, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Rural Regeneration initiative.

Looking to advertise? Call us on 01446 774484 or email: gemsales@tindlenews.co.uk

'Pioneer of Welsh showmen'

How Bavaria's Studt family brought fun and entertainment to the people of south Wales

MEMBERS of the Studt family returned to Barry after a break of over 100 years – in 2010 a number of rides were opened by Vernon Studt on the fairground site.

In the 1800s the Studts came from Bavaria and on arrival in south Wales became horse dealers and later moved from that into the showground business.

Jacob Studt came to Barry and opened a small fairground on the old showground in Holton Road.

It included a motor car scenic railway. A 'scenic railway' was a ride with painted backdrops.

Jacob was one of three brothers (John and Henry were the other two).

Late in the 1880s, he opened one of the first fairgrounds on the sands at Barry Island, it comprised two small roundabouts and a miniature railway.

The Studts returned to the Island on more than four occasions from 1889, and were

joined on the sands by John White, who brought his 'swing boats' from Cardiff, and who later took over the lease of the fairground on the Island, moving from there to Cosy Corner in the late 1920s on the takeover of his lease by Pat Collins.

'AMY EVANS'
Over the years both the Studt and White families were very generous to local charities, on one occasion the Studts gave half of a weekend's takings (not the profit) to aid the Amy Evans Hospital in Barry.

In 1897 Jacob, who was at the Newport showground, gave the whole of the week's takings from the fair – which included steam horses and switchback rides – to the Newport Hospital appeal fund, in exchange for the use of a piece of land owned by Lord Tredegar in Alexandra Road, which would be used by him as a showground.

Jacob travelled all over the country with his shows and appeared at regular intervals at the Hereford May Fair, Gloucester Barton Fair, in Basingstoke, Salisbury, Poole, Bournemouth and at

by TOM CLEMETT

Oxford St Giles Fair, where in 1908 he brought his switchback ride and gallopers.

The Studts took their shows to places nearer to home with a great many in Glamorgan.

One was held for a number of years at the Hayes in Cardiff and others were held in the surrounding areas – at the Easter Fair in Pontypridd, the Neath 'Bird in the Hand' fairground, the Bear Inn Field at Cowbridge, the field opposite the old bus station at Talbot Green, and in Pontycymmer.

Some of the family finally settled in Pontyclun.

In 1889, Jacob, who was then based in Maesteg, came back to Barry with his Royal Bioscope show.

It was an 'electric picture show' and complete with stage acts and hand coloured slides which were produced in France.

PIONEER

The show was a two-wagoned fronted show, with an 89 Key Gavioli organ and – and some-

thing that was a complete innovation to the residents of Barry – an electric portable lighting set!

In the same year, he was made a vice president of The Showman's Guild of south Wales and Northern Ireland, and in 1936, in a tribute to his work for that organisation, he was described as 'The Pioneer of Welsh Showmen'.

In 1889, he acquired one of the first engines made by Charles Burrell and Sons, Ltd., No 1451 'The Monarch', which in 1901 was replaced by 'General Buller', a Fowler traction engine capable of generating electricity.

Four years later, he sold this engine to Marshall's and replaced it with two brand new Fowler engines 'Queen Alexandra' and 'Emperor' – later renamed 'King Edward'.

Jacob's wife was the sister of John Johnson who ran the Prince of Wales Theatre in Penarth and who later came to Barry and opened the Princess Theatre in Cadoxton.

When that theatre was destroyed by fire in the late 1880s, he opened the first theatre in Barry Dock (Johnson's Victoria Theatre) in Holton Road.

This was on ground which became known as the Victoria Field, and was on the site of what was to become the Victoria Hotel (now Tesco's).

White's Cosy Corner

Another link with Barry fairground families was Billy Reohorn who was Jacob Studt's cousin and worked for the Studt family running their half-penny rock stall.

Another member of the Reohorn family married Alice Maud White and had seven children, the last of whom (Jack) ran White's Cosy Corner on the Island until a fire destroyed the fair, which had occupied the site since the 1920s.

In 1915, Henry Studt's 'living vans' were taken over by the war department for use as recruiting centres.

Henry, who had a zoological ride containing horses, ostriches and cockerels, sold it in the early 1930s to White Bros, who used it at Cosy Corner for a few years and later sold to Butlin's.

On later visits to Barry, Jacob Studt had transformed the two wagoned fronted show into an organ fronted

one with a 110 Key Gavioli with the living wagons stationed at each end.

The following year he replaced the 110 Key Gavioli with a 112 Keyless Organ, which was surrounded by a mass of carved figures covered in gold leaf made by craftsmen from the Black Forest area of Germany.

To further add to its attraction, he commissioned four very large columns surmounted with elaborate carved Corinthian capitals.

BIOSCOPE

Whenever his show was in opposition with other big shows, Jacob always came up with an added attraction; at one time he hired the chorus line from a London theatre to parade at the front of his show.

When his Bioscope shows were superseded by the cinema, he proceeded to open a number of cinemas in south Wales.

I believe that the first was next to the Windsor Arms in Pontyclun, which was later closed and replaced by one in Cowbridge Road, and the other two were at Llanharan and Pencoed.

The management of the cinemas was entrusted to his grandson Philip Phillips; he then stopped travelling and his son, John J. Studt took over a number of the family's pitches and used the organ for his rides.

The Studt family were one of the founder members of the South Wales Stallholders and Showman's Protection Association, which fought for fair rents and terms for pitches across south Wales and for a number of years Margaret Deakin Studt was its secretary.

'Stay booze-free for a month' CHALLENGE

THE Safer Vale Partnership is supporting Alcohol Concern's 'Dry January' – challenging people to stay booze-free for 31 days.

It says the benefits of giving up alcohol for a short period include: improved sleep; feel better; losing weight; improved skin and hair quality; and saving money.

A spokesperson for the charity said: "We are absolutely clear that this

The Mandela biopic is moving and powerful

THE life of Nelson Mandela is one that encompassed so many facets, from aspiring lawyer to a freedom fighter, a prisoner who became a national, and even global, icon.

While films like *Invictus* and *Goodbye Bafana* have told sections of the great man's life, no film has ever tried telling the whole story, something that hits cinema screens in *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*.

Played by Idris Elba, the film details Mandela's journey, a life that saw much drama, conflict, and change both in the life of Mandela and South Africa...

The sad passing of Nelson Mandela late last year grants

Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom a sombre note, the film looking back over a life that encompassed many facets.

Certainly, the film does the subject matter proud, presenting a rounded portrait of a man whose years on this earth were surrounded by controversy and then adoration, a symbol and figurehead for change.

Using the titular biography for inspiration, the film stays close to reality, and while emphasising Mandela's achievements, also presents the evidence that for all the good he did, there were also elements of his life that were perhaps not so praiseworthy.

While it would be counter-productive to have played these elements up in the face of the overwhelming good he did, it would have certainly made for an



by GARETH JAMIESON
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Talk on Twitter –
@GEMScreenTalk

even more intriguing film if things such as the ANC's use of terrorism (and Mandela's advocacy of it), had been tackled with a little more ferocity by the filmmakers, rather than passed off so simply here as a louder response to the government; the question of whether the ends justify the means so pertinent, but passed over.

The early parts of Mandela's life give the film a slow start but as tensions rise in South Africa, and he becomes more involved in trying to make a change, the film slowly starts taking shape, always flickering but never really truly igniting.

There are moments that thrill (the black population taking over a European-only train platform) and chill (the constant threat of violence and persecution, never more sadly realised than the Sharpeville massacre) but while it impresses and informs, you just want that one moment to really jump up and grab you – but it never seems to come.

The real joy of the film comes in the performances, with Idris Elba very good in the

lead role. An imposing presence on screen, Elba goes through the stages of Mandela's life and captures the characteristic nuances and speech patterns without ever resorting to impersonation.

As Mandela grows older, so Elba's turn grows, the mature wisdom of the man comfortably essayed by the actor, and even if by the end he resembles a muscular Desmond Tutu, it takes nothing away from an impressive turn.

As Winnie Mandela, Naomie Harris is equally as good, the actress showing expertly how events conspired to turn her from a timid housewife into a ferocious political animal, her actions given credence and weight by the troubles she had to endure, both through the actions of the government and also by the sacrifices needed to be made due to her husband's actions.

Even at 146 minutes, the story does move a little too quickly, skimming over events that deserve a film in their own right, but given the subject matter it can't be helped; as a piece of work on the life of a true icon, however, *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* is a powerful film – it just lacks that one real moment of impact to truly hit home.

VERDICT - A pair of excellent lead turns by Idris Elba and Naomie Harris make it a powerful piece of work, capturing the life of an iconic man. The story does move a little too swiftly but it is an impressive and moving film. Recommended.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *The Butler* (2013), *Invictus* (2009).

News from Penarth Computer Club

SAD FAREWELLS

WE have had to say a sad farewell to one of our long-standing members, Wally Davies, who passed away in December.

He was a cheerful chap with a fine sense of fun; a good friend, photographer and a long-time supporter of Scouting, as well as serving for several years on our club's committee.

Now we have to say farewell to another friend, Ron Price, who passed away on New Year's Day after a lengthy decline following a stroke. He was a quieter, more serious man, but appreciated a joke.

He also served on our committee, as well as volunteering for tea-making duties at our meetings. A gentle man and a gentleman – another good friend.

They both took on roles that helped other people and will be missed.

Hello to the New Year...

The last meeting of the old year was our chips and chat night with a quiz. It hit a snag when Mike J was indisposed and couldn't do his usual quiz. Kevin S bravely stood in at very short notice and devised a quiz in his own style. Brains, therefore, had to be engaged before the food was provided and the normal feasting proceeded.

The first meeting of the New Year is always our AGM to put to bed the finances and reports of the last year, and to make sure that we have someone to take the blame if anything goes wrong in the next 12 months.

After establishing the committee, we have a chat about what members

would like to hear about at the meetings. We have been trying hard recently to get more interaction between the speaker and the audience and are encouraged by the progress so far.

Even if you are terrified of technology, there is no reason to be afraid of us. We pride ourselves on being a friendly club.

We stress that we are not a bunch of computer experts and that we meet to help each other, share experiences and problems and provide support for new users who are struggling.

Our programme is designed to help members solve problems; provide general hints and tips; run question and answer sessions; get speakers to talk about topics of general interest to members.

Questions are encouraged during the talks. Mike J insists that there is no such thing as a stupid question, and any question is acceptable if someone genuinely wants it answered. If we cannot answer it we will say so, and try to find one.

If you have acquired a computer for Christmas and don't know how to get on with it, we should be able to help and will be pleased to have a go.

Come along and try us out. We learn and have fun.

Our next meeting is our (free) AGM on Tuesday, January 14 at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth, 7.30pm for 8pm; reports, election of officers and a discussion about programme topics. Visitors always welcome.

HOWARD DESMOND

Can I thank you personally, please?

I WENT for a walk this morning around Barry Island and lost my car keys.

After turning my clothing/camera bag inside out I realised they weren't in my possession and decided to retrace my steps.

I then saw a note on the windscreen which, basically, said: 'found your keys, waited for 10 minutes then took them to Marco's Cafe'. Had a 'rogue' found the keys, I dread to think what could have happened.

The finder didn't leave any details at Marco's, but I hope they will contact me on 07870815176 so that I can thank them personally.

Mike Gallagher, Barry.

Did you know you can find The Glamorgan GEM on Twitter? Follow us @gem_news

VILLAGE'S CHRISTMAS MARKET RAISED £1,300 FOR CHARITIES

PHOTOGRAPHS by IAN DIXON

THE village of Peterston-super-Ely held its Christmas market in the Church Hall on December 14.

All the traditional aspects of a village market were on show, with a tombola, flowers, paintings by local artists, games for the children and a wide range of craft and food stalls.

Refreshments were enjoyed while listening to choirs made up of local children and adults, and there was handbell ringing, conducted by Father Martyn.

The highly successful event contributed around £1,300 to a number of charities.



SPOOKY TALES with HAYLEY WILLIAMS

January – a devastating month through the ages

THE month of January (Ianuarius in Latin, Ionawr in Welsh) is named after the god Janus, of Roman mythology, and means door – as the month is the doorway to the New Year.

Its birthstone is the garnet, and its flowers Dianthus caryophyllus or galanthus. The Anglo-Saxons called this winter month wulf-monath, meaning wolf month, or wintarmanoth (winter/cold month).

The observation of New Year on January 1 dates back to 153 BC, during the rule of the Romans. Before this celebrated date was set, March 25 was considered to be the beginning of the new year; but it was not until 1752 that Britain adopted January 1 for New Year's Day because it was calculated as the first month on the Gregorian calendar, named after Pope Gregory.

This date was considered to be lucky because the full moon on that night would bring hope for the year ahead.

January 2, through an Old Saxon belief, was one of the unluckiest days of the year; although no real proof stating why seems to have survived. If a baby was born on this day, death was said to be unpleasant.

January 6 marks the end of the Christmas festival. It is appropriately named Twelfth Night because it brings a close to the 12 days of the festive period.

It is the date of the Epiphany on the Christian calendar, a night when the Three Wise Men (or Kings) visited baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

Not to be confused with Shakespeare's comedy play of the same name (a piece that I studied for both O-Level and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) Twelfth Night has been celebrated over the course of time by many different traditions. But in most cultures it was a joyous occasion overflowing with food, drink, and merrymaking.

Superstition stated that all yuletide trees and colourful decorations must be dismantled and put away before January 6, as it was deemed to be unlucky. Failure to obey the custom would bring misfortune and disaster into the lives of the defiant.

The 13th is the feast day of St Hilary, a Catholic bishop born on this date in 368 AD. It is said to be the coldest day of the year, as wintry events of frost, ice and snow from our past have been recorded to begin on this day.

The earliest recognition of such events on January 13 date back to 1205, when the River Thames froze over, and ale and wine turned to solid ice due to the sub-zero temperatures.

An extract from Stowe's Chronicle states: 'So began a frost which contin-

ued 'til 2nd and 12th day of March, so that the ground could not be tilled.'

In the month of January, between 1550 and 1750, Frost Fairs were held. The occasion had tents, sideshows, food stalls and ice bowling. These festivals took place upon frozen rivers, lakes and ponds and lasted for the duration of four days.

January 20 is superficially St Agnes' Eve when unmarried maidens and girls would perform rituals before going to bed. They would wish for dreams about future husbands by reciting The Lord's Prayer, fasting all day and finally retiring to bed by walking up the staircase backwards.

'The Eve of St Agnes' is an 1820 poem by John Keats:

*'Ah, bitter chill it was! The owl,
for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the
frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly
fold:*

*Numb were the Beadsman's fingers,
while he told,
His rosary, and while his frosted
breath,*

*Like pious incense from a censer
old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven,
without a death,*

*Past the sweet Virgin's picture,
while his prayer he saith.'*

This usually coincided with the first new moon of the year. An unwashed silk handkerchief was held up and used to stare at the moon.

It was believed that the number of moons that could be seen through the handkerchief revealed the number of years until the maiden would be married.

On viewing the moon in this way, a chant was recited: *'All hail to thee moon, all hail to thee. I prythee, good moon, reveal to me this night who my husband shall be.'*

Historical events which happened throughout January include:

January 2, 1770, an enormous Christmas pie was baked: it consisted of two bushels (measures) of flour, 20lbs butter, four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, two woodcocks, six snipe, four partridges, two neat's tongues, two curlews, two blackbirds and six pigeons. Weighing 12 stone, it would be large enough to feed the people for weeks!

January 17, 1912, Robert Scott and his party reached the South Pole, and on the 29th in 1856 the Victoria Cross originated. The medals were actually made from the metal of guns captured during the Crimean War.

With its unusual traditions and superstitions coming to light from ancient times, it seems that January had a devastating effect upon folk from all walks of life.

hayley.williams550@yahoo.com

Barry Island exhibition highlights war centenary

TO mark the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War, Glamorgan War-time Heritage Centre at Barry Island will be opening its doors this Sunday, January 12, with an exhibition of British Army equipment from the last 100 years.

Police appeal after test drive car is stolen and stripped

POLICE are appealing for information after a car was taken for a test drive – and then found dumped two days later in Five Mile Lane after it had been stripped down to a shell.

The car, a black Vauxhall Corsa, was taken for a test drive from Chequered Flag Car Sales, Pontypridd, on Saturday, January 4, but was never returned.

Its bulkhead – identified through the chassis number – was found two days later, dumped in a recess along the A4226,

known as The Five Mile Lane which runs between Bonvilston and Barry.

Police want to hear from anyone who may have noticed anything suspicious along the stretch of the lane close to Northcliffe Farm Shop.

It is likely that the car part was dumped late on Sunday or during the morning of Monday, January 6.

Anyone with information is urged to call South Wales Police's non emergency 101 number or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Normandy D-Day landings and of the 'Market Garden' assault during the Second World War, and the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, so 2014 is set to be a very busy year for the Barry at War team.

We hope that our display of webbing from the First World War, to the armoured vests being worn today in Afghanistan, will provide a tangible reminder to people of the way that our wartime heritage has shaped our region, and we invite veterans of all conflicts to come along and share their memories of its use.

One of my Normandy veteran friends commented to me recently, that the only thing that kept him awake during the long march across northern France was his webbing slapping his behind!

I personally remember dreading getting my issued '58 Pattern' webbing wet, as it would double its weight in no time at all; and I'm sure that every veteran has an anecdote associated with this simple item of their 'kit'.

Glamorgan has a rich wartime heritage, with Barry Docks, for example, playing an important part in the conflict in Aden, as did RAF St Athan during the Gulf War, and RAF Llandow during the Second World War.

Barry's Merchant Seamen served with distinction in all of Britain's

wars; and they should be remembered in this once seafaring community.

To mark this year's important commemorations, Barry at War will be working with the Cardiff YMCA on an exciting project to research the role of this organisation during the Great War and beyond.

Most people will associate the YMCA with the 1970s pop group the 'Village People' long before they link the organisation to the mud and barbed wire of a Great War battlefield, but the organisation played a valuable role in providing a little comfort to our troops on the front line during both world wars.

The YMCA is also credited with being responsible for the introduction of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance.

If readers would like to find out more about the role played by the YMCA during the two world wars, Mandy Candy of the YMCA will be giving an illustrated talk at Barry Library, on Monday, January 13, at 6.45pm.

The Glamorgan War-time Heritage Centre opens its doors at 11am on Sunday, January 12, and as always, admission is free.

To find out more about these events, call 07930 874161.

ADE PITMAN,
Barry at War

Vale Council hands road safety awards to its dedicated school crossing patrols



School Crossing Patrols (SCPs) and volunteers involved with the child pedestrian training scheme Kerbcraft in Vale Primary Schools, were honoured recently with Vale Council Road Safety awards at a presentation.

Rob Thomas, Vale director of development services, said: "The success of any scheme relies upon the dedication and commitment of the individuals involved, be it on a voluntary basis or in a paid role. To remain enthusiastic and continue to smile while standing in the pouring rain takes a very dedicated individual."

He paid tribute to over 200 Kerbcraft volunteers who have freely given up their time since 2002 to step up to the challenge of helping prepare young road users to be safe pedestrians. Those first five and six year-old pupils who were trained 11 years ago may soon be leaving school and applying for their driving licenses!

Since Kerbcraft started in Wales, child pedestrian training had involved nearly 5,000 children in the Vale of Glamorgan alone. Several awards were presented to volunteers from School Crossing Patrols and Kerbcraft, whose efforts were particularly appreciated over the past twelve months.

Rob Thomas said: "Our heartfelt thanks goes to everyone who has taken part in Kerbcraft training this year and we hope that, with sustained funding, it will continue for many years to come".

Everyone took part in a light-hearted quiz to test their knowledge of 1953 (the year that the School Crossing Patrol Act was passed by Parliament), followed by the serving of light refreshments. The event was hosted once again by the Vale Council Road Safety Team.

Area winners, Llantwit

Major and rural Vale:

Alison Richardson from Eagleswell Primary School plays many active roles within the school community, both inside and outside, and has supported and encouraged the school junior road safety officers (JRSOs) to spread the road safety message to both parents and pupils alike.

Barry:

Barrie Evans, a mobile patrol officer for the past year, started outside St Helen's Junior School over three years ago and is currently covering Rhws Primary School. A very popular and reliable officer!

Penarth, Sully and Dinas Powys:

Elaine Storey supports pupils to cross the road from a variety of schools in Penarth on Redlands Road. With over 13 years of service to her name, she has always been creative and innovative with ideas to support her role, visiting schools and rewarding positive behaviour for those who cross with her. Sadly she will be leaving her post after Christmas and will be missed by everyone!

A special award was presented to Karin Williams who, while patrolling outside Rhws Primary School on June 20, was involved in a 'freak' incident

when a car flipped over and mounted the kerb where she and a group of children and parents were standing.

Protecting the children, Karin took the full force of the impact and sustained very serious injuries.

Onlookers said that several children could have died or would have had far worse injuries if it had not been for Karin's courageous and brave reactions.

Nominated and deservedly winning a 'Pride of Britain' Award, Karin is making a remarkable recovery and was there to receive her SCP Special Award from Coun Lis Burnett, Vale of Glamorgan Council cabinet member for regeneration, innovation, planning and transportation.

School Crossing Patrol of the Year:

A stalwart of the SCP service since 1998 and 'ambassador' for all school crossing patrols, Jean Hatter can be relied upon to cover all sites and undertake training or provide support.

Popular with fellow officers and the public alike, and always showing the utmost dedication and commitment to her work, this year probably proved to be her most challenging. On the afternoon of the accident at Rhws, the crossing point needed to be covered and this lady was sent to do the job!

She managed to remain calm, despite everything going on around her, and used her experience to ensure the safety of everyone crossing with her.

Over the following weeks her manner and continuing professionalism helped to relieve the anxiety of the children and parents attending Rhws School and restore their confidence, once again, in using this school crossing patrol point.

A lady who always carries out her job to the best of her ability and fully deserves the title and famous SCP shield!

Kerbcraft:

A random draw was made of all the volunteers' names, many of whom have been involved with the scheme for a number of years.

The winners, chosen to represent every person who freely gives up their time to help the children, were: Joanna Hopkins and Lisa Guy who, coincidentally, are both dedicated volunteers at Rhws Primary School.

Competition winners:

Presentations were also made to the winners of the Road Safety Competitions held during 2013. These were:

School Crossing Patrol Diamond Anniversary Banner competition – Seren Russell (winner, Ysgol Pen y Garth); Rosa Davies (runner-up, Ysgol Bro Morganwg); Lewys Williams (runner-up, Ysgol Bro Morganwg).

Drink-Drive Multimedia competition – the winning DVD was produced by three students from year-8 at Cowbridge Comprehensive School: Helen Jenkins, Freya Evans and Francesca Weir.

Drink-Drive Poster Competition – Freya Large (winner, Peterston-super-Ely Primary School); runners-up Finn Martin-Jones, Daisy Martin-Jones and Livvy Cross (all PSE).

Runners-up, Erin Evans and Phoebe-Mai Bagshaw (both Murch Junior School).

ABOVE: Helen Jenkins, Freya Evans and Francesca Weir, Cowbridge Comprehensive.

BELOW: Jean Hatter, with the SCP Shield.



Karin Williams with Coun Lis Burnett.



Barrie Evans, for St Helen's Junior School.



Elaine Storey, for Penarth.



ABOVE: The Drink-Drive competition winners.



ABOVE: Alison Richardson, for Eagleswell Primary School.



ABOVE: Joanna Hopkins and Lisa Guy.



ABOVE: The school crossing patrol competition winners.

High tides on the Heritage Coast being monitored by Vale Council



Photographers Lauren Yeoman and Glyn Evans recorded images of the high tides in recent days, Lauren in Barry, Glyn (see below) in Penarth.

Although the sea has breached walls on the Heritage Coast, there has been no significant property flooding.

The council says its coastal and flood risk management section is still continuing to monitor the situation.

PHOTOGRAPHS by LAUREN YEOMAN



ABOVE: High tide on Monday in Penarth. PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

Desert Divas' treat in store for shoppers



ABOVE: The Desert Divas, with Mark and Carl (The Jensen Effect) at Waitrose

LOCAL Middle Eastern dance troupe, the Desert Divas, rounded off another successful year with a surprise performance for shoppers at Waitrose in Barry recently, when local musicians The Jensen Effect promoted their new charity single, *All Across the Land*, in store.

Their year has seen the ladies perform at a variety of venues across south Wales, including the Wales Millennium Centre, taking part in the Barry Arts Festival Parade through the town in May, a return visit to the Llandough fete in June and the Barry Friendship Festival in July.

They danced at various 'haflas' (get-togethers) around the region, such as Bollywood Bling in Cardiff and the Hot! Hot! Hot! Charity Hafla in Pencoed and have performed at numerous birthdays, social and charity events throughout the year.

The involvement with The Jensen Effect began when the Divas were invited to dance at a party at Ty Hapus, the centre for younger dementia sufferers in Barry.

One of the dancers, Andy, sings in Vale Voices, one of the choirs that sang on *All Across the Land* and took it to the group, suggesting that they could devise a choreography to perform at Ty Hapus.

Carl and Mark were delighted and invited the Divas to give a repeat performance at Waitrose in Cowbridge on Saturday, January 25.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the group, which formed after meeting at an adult education class in Barry in 2003, and plans are taking shape to celebrate with a spectacular show at Barry Memo on September 20.

Past members who would like to be involved in any capacity are invited to get in touch, or come along to one of our Tuesday evening sessions in Dinas Powys.

The Desert Divas can be contacted by phoning Sue on 07787510608. AG

SEASONAL WALKS IN THE RAIN with Penarth and District Ramblers

AS the unseasonal weather continued, and in sunshine spiced with some heavy downpours of rain, two more walks in the Ramblers' annual Festival of Winter Walks took place.

Before the end of 2013, six walkers joined Joy, Bracken and Bronte at Cosmeston and set off in rainfall up through the estate to join the Wales Coast Path and the skies cleared, rain stopped and reaching Lavernock Point, a muddy, wet, slippery path took them onto Lavernock beach.

Reaching the shelter of St Marys Well Bay, quick refreshments were enjoyed before joining the road near The Bay Caravan Park.

Re-joining the Wales Coast Path, muddy path edges around ploughed meadows led to the delightful Lavernock Nature Reserve, which contains the remains of a Second World War anti-aircraft battery.

Fort Road led back to Cosmeston Country Park and more thick squelching mud at Cogan Wood, before their return to the medieval village to learn some of the history of the 14th century, which made a very pleasant way to round off the walk.

Thirteen keen walkers braved the elements on the second day of 2014, setting off in high spirits with William to enjoy a circular walk including lunch at the Blue Anchor in East Aberthaw, which

is fast becoming an annual treat! Joining the Wales Coast Path and crossing part of the pebble beach to avoid a flooded area, a sudden shower led to one of the party taking a tumble, but after first aid they were able to continue.

Climbing to the Bulwarks and passing through Porthkerry Caravan Park, then the Rhose Point quarries, thick wet mud was the order of the day as well as deep puddles on the path which made the going difficult in places.

From Fontygary, cliff

steps led them down to Pleasant Harbour and past the old ruined lime works, originally marshy ground where the river Thaw ran towards the sea before it was re-routed when Aberthaw Power Station was built.

Then it was from Well Road up to the Blue Anchor, where boots and muddy outer clothing were hastily removed, before a well-deserved and pleasant luncheon in the warmth of the pub.

Their return in bright sunshine was made via Port Road then Nurston and through Rhose village walking around the airport bend to drop downhill past the Old Rectory and the tall viaduct.

On January 12, meet at 9am at the Barry Waterfront for a 9.5-mile moderate walk at Porthcawl and Kenfig; contact Joy on 01446 737131.

On January 14, the midweek walk will leave Cogan Leisure Centre at 9am for an 8-mile walk taking in Clifton Suspension Bridge and Avon Gorge; contact William on 01446 747239. JS

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Glamorgan Hunt sets out from Cowbridge on New Year's Day



PHOTOS
by
**MIKE
WILCOCK**

Beware bogus 'bank telephone callers' – WARNING

South Wales Police are warning members of the public not to be fooled by telephone callers seeking to obtain bank details.

The warning follows an incident which took place very recently when an elderly woman received a call from a man purporting to be a police officer who had someone in custody with her bank details and asked for this information to check them back.

Detective Sergeant Claire Huish of Barry CID said: "I want to stress to the public that this is a scam."

"You should never pass any banking information to anyone over the telephone – especially if you have received an unexpected call."

"Callers like this can be very plausible but legitimate organisations or banks will never ask you to provide this information."

"I advise people not to comply with contact from unexpected callers without first verifying the legitimacy of the call."

If people are concerned about a call, they can contact South Wales Police or ring 101.

IT was the day of the hunt in Cowbridge on New Year's Day – the second time the town had been the starting point over the festive season, as big crowds had turned out for the Boxing Day event as well.



The Barry railway welcomes historic mode of transport



IMAGE by **NICK WILCOCK**

IN the run-up to Christmas, the Barry Tourist Railway offered a historic mode of transport.

Giving rides from the town to the Island was a 'rail-car' – a railway carriage which requires no train to pull it, because it has its own engine.



A WAAF officer who established and organised the cipher office at the heart of Churchill's wartime policy making, and who was born in Llantwit Major, died on November 26, aged 96.

Born in 1916, Joan Williams was educated at Malvern, becoming head girl in 1933.

She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) as an officer in 1939, but was then transferred to the WAAF, being posted to fighter command at Bentley Priory, Stanmore, during the Battle of Britain.

Eventually, she was sent to the Air Ministry in London, and asked to

recruit other WAAFS for the Cabinet Office Cipher Officer (COCO).

As a Squadron Leader, 'Jo' Williams – as she then was – ran the office from 1942-1946, and was a vital cog in this war-making organisation, dealing with the passage of top secret signals between the venues of wartime conferences at Cairo, Washington, Tehran and elsewhere, and London.

At these conferences, the US 'Germany First' policy; the North African and south of France landing; the first date for the Normandy invasion, and relations with the Soviet Union were thrashed out.

Churchill's PPS later said: "The Prime Minister has never had better service in the handling of his signals."

She was awarded a mention in despatches

and awarded an OBE, marrying a Conservative candidate for Cardiff North in the 1950 election, David Llewellyn.

He retired from

Parliament in 1959 and the Llewellyns then moved to Berkshire, where she was still driving and attending fitness classes until two weeks before her death at 96.

I think she deserves a blue plaque in the Vale of Glamorgan, at Llantwit Major. **CHRISTOPHER SHORT, Barry.**

GLAMORGAN GEM LETTERS extra

REMEMBERING LADY JOAN LLEWELLYN OBE: Wartime Cabinet Cipher Officer

'Thanks to you, NSPCC's help for children continues'

I WOULD like to say a personal thank you to all of your readers in the Vale who have helped support the NSPCC throughout 2013.

Another year that has seen many high profile child abuse cases and shocking stories of cruelty so severe they've resulted in the deaths of innocent children – often at the hands of those who were supposed to protect them.

No-one can forget the faces of little Daniel Pelka, Hamzah Khan and Keanu Williams following their tragic deaths. This is a clear indication that while the shocking scale and effect of child abuse has moved centre stage in the public consciousness, still more needs to be done to prevent it from happening in the first place, which is why the NSPCC needs your readers' continued support.

Many primary school children are suffering abuse and neglect.

Our ground-breaking ChildLine Schools Service uses trained volunteers to talk to primary school children about abuse.

Through a series of assemblies and workshops, they will visit every primary school in every community in the UK once every two years to talk to children aged from nine to 11 about abuse, how to protect themselves, and where to get help if they need it – and they'll continue to visit each of these schools every two years.

Your support can help us to empower an entire generation and protect many thousands of children from the devastating effects of abuse. Anyone interested in volunteering should visit www.nspcc.org.uk for further information.

In Wales, we have two service centres helping local children and families. We've made significant strides to help children in the Vale of Glamorgan and beyond this year, and this is all thanks to people like you and your readers.

To make a donation text HOPE to 70744 to give £4 or visit www.nspcc.org.uk. **JO LEONARD, (SPCC community fundraising manager for the Vale).**

Fibromyalgia group
THE next meeting of the Vale of Glamorgan Fibromyalgia Support Group is on Tuesday, January 14 at 11am-1pm. Call Gaynor for more details on 01446 733315.

SANTAS ARE OFF TO THE RACES AT PETERSTON-SUPER-ELY FUN RUN

PHOTOGRAPHS
by IAN DIXON

THE village of Peterston-super-Ely held its Christmas fun run around Wyndham Park. There were children's races, started by Father Martyn, and an 'owner and dog' race, followed by a wheelbarrow race.

A barbecue and drinks fortified the adults, and a great time was had by all, resulting in a substantial contribution of £410 to the village's playing field and play station fund.



There was great demand for the barbecue!



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VALE BEACH IS BATTERED AS THE SEA SHOWS ITS AWESOME POWER



IMAGES by SUE BAKER

THE GEM'S Sue Baker captured these images which illustrate how the force of nature has changed the character of the Llantwit Major beach area and meadow.

The Vale Council closed the road to the beach over part of the weekend, and is assessing when best to start a clear-up.



ABOVE: The beach car park is strewn with rocks and pebbles.



Sheikhs bring gifts of friendship and peace

TWO Muslim sheikhs brought friendship and peace when they joined a church congregation for its Epiphany service last weekend (January 5).

The sheikhs and their families took part in the service at St Mary's Church, Wenvoe, as a sign of reconciliation between the two faiths.

Sheikh Abdalla Yassin Mohammed, originally from the Sudan, and now a member of the Muslim Council of Wales, and Sheikh Elnayyal Abu Groon, from the Jordan, joined in prayers during the service and received a blessing at communion.

The service was led by Canon Robin Morrison, retired Church and Society Officer for the Church in Wales.

Instead of a sermon, Canon Robin interviewed Sheikh Abdallah about shared concerns in a world of religious vio-



ABOVE (left to right): Sheikh Elnayyal Abu Groon, Canon Robin Morrison and Sheikh Abdalla Yassin Mohammed at St Mary's Church, Wenvoe.

lence and division.

The visit was part of a project set up by Canon Robin and Sheikh Abdallah to counter Islamic sectarian division.

Called 'The Open Tent,' the project aims to promote the "common humanity" of people of the two faiths.

It follows a series of

10 joint conferences called 'Finding a Common Voice' between the Church in Wales and the Muslim Council of Wales between 2006-11.

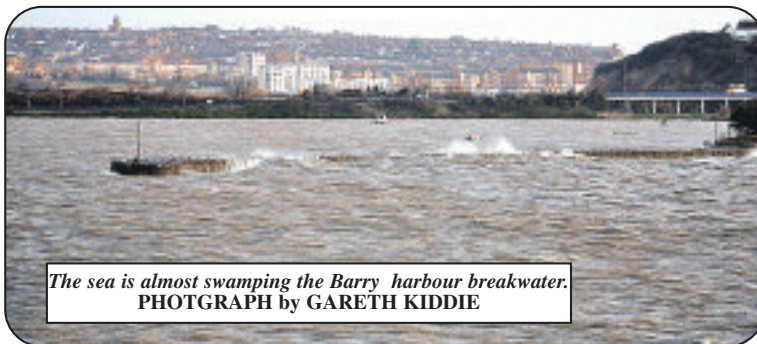
Canon Robin said: "The epiphany message of a God who manifests the nature of God as love calls us to take seriously 'our common humanity in and under God' and to work in practical ways to achieve that vision."

"Epiphany celebrates the magi, the wise ones - scientists, astrologers and cosmologists - fol-

lowing the light of a star, as they sought for new meaning and hope, enlightenment and understanding in the birth of a baby in Bethlehem.

"This was a good context for representatives of Islam to meet with Christians and share a mutual concern for new understanding, peace and love between people of all faiths, within all faiths, and in relation to the main challenges of violence and conflict facing the world in 2014."

The bad weather strikes Barry!



The sea is almost swamping the Barry harbour breakwater.
PHOTOGRAPH by GARETH KIDDIE



ABOVE: The invading sea - one couple are taken by surprise at the ferocity of the wind and waves. PHOTOGRAPH by GARETH KIDDIE

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 Not suitable for applicants with mobility issues
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 • Central heating
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 • Gardens
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 • Double-glazing
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H4U Reference 243195
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 • First floor
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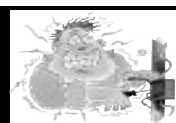
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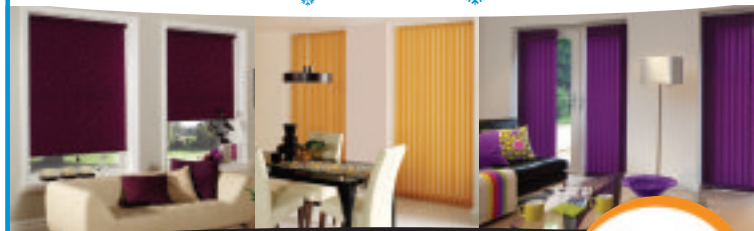
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For a job description or further information please contact David Harris 07834 703535.

To apply please forward your C.V. to Mr. David Harris, Show Director, 1 Mead Cottages, Penllin, Cowbridge or email vale.show@btinternet.com.

Closing Date: 31st January, 2014.

Public Notice

LICENSING ACT 2003

To whom it may concern: I/We, The Leisure Department at The Vale of Glamorgan Council, do hereby give notice that they have applied to the Licensing Authority, Vale of Glamorgan Council for the grant of our premises licence at:

Nell's Point Events Space - within the new Nell's Point car park.

The application is to permit regulated entertainment such as: 1. Plays 2. Films 3. Live Music 4. Recorded Music 5. Performances of Dance 6. Street Entertainment

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Any persons wishing to make representations to this application may do so by writing to Licensing Department, Vale of Glamorgan Council Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU not later than 28 days after the date of this notice.

Representations received after this date will not be considered. A copy of the Application can be viewed at the Civic Offices during normal office hours.

Date: 6th January 2014

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Family Notices

JACK BAKER

Sadly, after fighting to the end, Jack died at home on New Years Day. Pat, Rhianedd, Carys and their families would like to thank all their friends for the fantastic support and love shown at this difficult time.

He will live in our hearts forever.

The funeral will be held at Coychurch Crematorium on Tuesday, 14th January at 3.45pm.

WEATHERER Thomas Clifford (Chick)

Peacefully on January 2 at Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend in the presence of his family, Chick of Llandow, beloved husband of the late Rose, dearly loved father of Anita, dear father-in-law of John.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W. James & Sons, Fommon, Funeral Thursday January 16, service 1.00pm, at Llandow Church, followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium Bridgend at 2.15pm. Family Flowers only to Funeral Home, donations if desired to British Heart Foundation, c/o Mr. J. W. James, 11 Fommon Road, Rhosce, CF62 3DZ.

SKELTON Lilian Emily

Suddenly on December 23 at UHW Cardiff, in her 91st year, Lilian of Rhosce, beloved wife of the late Herbert, dearly loved mother of Sheila and Stephen, mother-in-law of David and Natalie, much loved grandmother of Rhianon, Jessica and Alex, great-grandmother of Kieran.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W. James & Sons, Fommon, Funeral Tuesday January 14, service 2.00pm at St. Peters Church, Rhosce, followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 3.00pm. Flowers may be sent to the Funeral Home.

NEATHEY Bryn

Peacefully at Llandough Hospital, Penarth, on Saturday 28th December 2013, Bryn aged 81 years, dearly loved husband of Margaret, loving father of Lynne, dear father-in-law of Jonathan and a devoted grandfather of Peter and David. Bryn, much loved and respected, will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

Funeral service to be held at St Peter's Church, Dinas Powys on Wednesday, 15th January 2014 at 2.00pm followed by interment at St Andrew's Cemetery, St Andrew's Major for immediate family only. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu, if desired, to Marie Curie Hospice may be sent directly to Marie Curie Hospice, Bridgeman Road, Penarth, CF64 3YR. All enquires to Green Willow Funerals, 21a Station Road, Dinas Powys, CF84 4DE. Tel (029) 2051 4627.

TAYLOR Peggy (Mary Alice)

Peacefully on December 29th at Baltimore House Care Home, Barry, Peggy, well known of Barry Island, John's Hot Bread Shop, Red Cross, Welsh Medium Education and Adult Learning. Devoted wife of the late Raymond, much loved Mum and Mum In Law of Susan and Terry, Gaynor and The Late John, Jane and David, Ricky and Kath, and Caroline (Atapini).

A Cherished Gran, Great Gran, Great Great Gran and Auntie. Loving Sister to Joan and Betty.

Resting in the private chapel of The Vale Funeral Service, 181 Court Road, Barry until her service at Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Street, Barry on Thursday, January 16th at 1pm, followed by cremation at Cardiff and Glamorgan Crematorium.

Family flowers only please. Donations if desired may be made to Holy Trinity Church in memory of Peggy. The family wish to thank all who were involved with Peggy's care. Further enquiries to Lyndsay Ellis @ The Vale Funeral Service 01446 407962.

JERVIS

The family of the late Eluned Ann Jervis would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the kindness and support given to them during their recent bereavement.

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Family Notices

SAVORY Joan Eugenia

Joan Eugenia Savory, late of Cora Street, Barry. Passed away on Thursday January 1, 2014. Wife of the late Bob, mother of Janet and her late husband David, Robert and his wife Carole. Grandmother of Steven, Leah and Dan, great-grandmother of Calum and Eleanor.

Resting at AG Adams & Son Tynwydd Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry, until her funeral service at St John Baptist Church, Sully on Friday January 17 at 11.00am, followed by cremation at the Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 12 noon.

Family flowers only, but donations in lieu of flowers to Tenovus (c/o AG Adams & Son, Barry).

PIKE Veronica

Gently passed away 4 January 2014 at home, Veronica of Llantwit Major. Beloved wife of Cliff and dearly loved mother of Gerald and Barbara, grandmother to Alexandra and Lawrence and great grandmother to Leo.

"She was the voice of our hearts."

Funeral service in Our Lady & St Iltyds Catholic Church on Monday, 20 January 2014 at 12.30pm to which all friends are welcome. All enquiries WA Brown & Son, 01446 792489.

WILLIAMS Frances Rita

Peacefully after a short illness on December 29 at UHW Cardiff, Rita of Barry and formerly of Rhoose, beloved wife of the late Mervyn, dearly loved Aunt of Christine, Stephen and Michael, dear friend to Gil and his family.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Ffnonon. Funeral Monday January 13, service 11.15am at St. David's Methodist Church, Colcot, Barry, followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 12 noon. Family flowers only to Funeral Home. Donations if desired to Salvation Army or Diabetes U.K. c/o Mr. J. W. James, 11 Ffnonon Road, Rhoose, CF62 3DZ.

SMITH Maureen (Mo)

Peacefully at Llandough Hospital on January 3, Mo of Phillipa Freeth Court, Barry. Dearly beloved wife of Mick, Mo will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.

Resting at AG Adams & Son Tynwydd Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry, until her funeral service in the chapel on Monday, January 20 at 11.00am, followed by cremation at the Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry, at 12 noon. Family flowers only, but donations in lieu to Marie Curie Cancer Care, Holme Tower, Bridgeman Road, Penarth CF64 3YR.
No black attire at Mo's request.

MILSOM Kenneth

Val and family would like to say thank you for all the messages of sympathy, the flowers and kind donations sent on the sad loss of Ken. A special thank you to Mr James of Ffnonon and the Reverend Duncan Ballantyne for a kind and caring service.

COPE Margaret Marylyn

Robert Cope, daughter Emma and son James, together with their families Neil Stewart, Angus and Rory, Fiona, Spencer and Thomas, wish to thank everyone for the tremendous support, sympathy and tributes extended following the death of Margaret Marylyn Cope (nee Gower) on 8th November 2013.

James and Fiona are pleased to announce the safe birth of a baby boy on 23rd December 2013.

Griff Gower Cope.

On this happier note we would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year for 2014.

KENT Cyril

Of Wick, Vale of Glamorgan (formerly of the Bluebell Inn, St. Mellons, Cardiff), dear husband of Bunty, died peacefully on Saturday, 21st December 2013.

Funeral followed by burial at St James' Church, Wick on Friday, 10th January 2014 at 12 noon. Family flowers only, donations may be made to the RAF Benevolent Fund, c/o JR & MF David, Ewenny Road, St Brides Major, Vale of Glamorgan, CF32 0SB.

JONES Gwyn

(Former Chief Superintendent) of Llantwit Major

After a short illness at the Princess of Wales Hospital, aged 90 years. Beloved husband of Betty, father of Wayne and Lynne, grandfather of Gareth, Catrin, Matthew, Darren and Emma.

Resting at WA Brown & Son, Llantwit Major until the funeral at 2pm on Friday, 17th January at St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major and then Coychurch Crematorium. After a long and happy life with Betty, a distinguished career and active retirement, he will be sadly missed, but never forgotten.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
Philip Irwin
8th January 2014

Best wishes from
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Happy 92nd Birthday
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JACK STEVENS
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on the announcement
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Mair's dreams 'were fulfilled'

MAIR ANN REED, from Monkash, who has died peacefully, surrounded by her family, husband Dennis, and children Sian, Beti, Ceri, Owen, Sara, Alun and Elin, was a much-loved gran to her 25 grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Mair was formerly of New Mill Farm, Monkash, but in more recent years had lived at Bussiere Boffy in France.

She will be remembered by many as a renowned dairy farmer, together with Dennis milking up to 100 cows twice a day before moving to farm in France.

She will also be remembered for her warm welcome at her New Mill Farm Tea Room.

Cremation will take place in France, but a memorial service is being planned in the Vale in February. Details will be released once they become available.

Her husband and children said: "She lived for her family and fulfilled her dreams."



School rallies to community with festive hampers



Some of the pupils who helped at the hamper-giving tea party.



LLANTWIT MAJOR Comprehensive School pupils and staff work hard throughout the year to encapsulate its mission statement of being a 'school for the 21st century at the heart of the community'.

The festive period was an excellent example of this, with the school running a number of events in the run-up to Christmas including the Christmas fayre and the school carol service.

On December 11, the school hosted its fifth annual senior citizens hamper-giving tea party.

Pupils from all year groups spent the previous four weeks creating and filling 50 hampers, which were donated to senior citizens' groups from across the community.

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YOUNG GYMNASTS HAVE FIRST TASTE OF COMPETITION

FIVE gymnasts from Barry YMCA Gymnastics Club had their first taste of performing in front of a large audience when they entered the South Central competition.

Performing alongside gymnasts from clubs from four other Welsh counties, the excited gymnasts had a fun and friendly introduction to competition – and they performed fantastically.

All five gymnasts performed routines on vault, bars, beam and tumble. They also completed a conditioning routine.

The ethos of Barry YMCA Gymnastics



The young gymnasts.

club is that everyone who competes enjoys the experience, achieving their potential while having lots of

fun.

This was certainly the case for the four Barry gymnasts – Lili Hopkins, Lily Foscolo, Seren Watts and Soffia Kelley, who competed in the six years category. They had smiles on their faces throughout the competition.

There were individual award successes for Seren Watts, who gained a gold medal on vault and a bronze medal on beam. She also had award ribbons for placing fourth on tumble, fifth on bars and fifth overall.

Soffia Kelley also climbed onto the podium, placing second on

vault. Lili Hopkins and Lily Foscolo had personal successes, successfully completing a number of new skills with confidence and poise.

In the seven years age group, Heather Heslop also had fun performing her routines confidently. She visited the podium five times.

She gained a bronze medal for placing third on vault, while she gained ribbon

awards for placing fourth on range and conditioning, and fifth on bars and beam. She also collected an award for placing fourth overall.

Thank you to Olivia Parry and Rachel Shepherd for coaching, and Caitlin Allin and Karen Davies for judging.

For further information regarding gymnastics at Barry YMCA, telephone 01446 724001.

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Pencoed seconds edge out Pyle

THE Bryn Glas ground had stood up to the recent deluge well, allowing both Pyle seconds and Pencoed seconds to adopt an expansive approach in this Mid Glamorgan League Division One match.

Pencoed started well, a half break from centre Gareth Dyer putting them on the offensive, and driving play from props Sean Donovan and Anthony Morris set up good ruck ball with outside half Adam Williams making a clean break from the resultant possession. Unfortunately for Pencoed, their finishing was to let them down.

Williams then opened the scoring with a 30-metre penalty goal. Pencoed failed to gather a high kick shortly after the restart, and wing-threequarter Paine hacked through from 35 metres to score wide out.

Pencoed centre Rhys Watkins then put his side into the home 22 with a measured kick, and sustained pressure from the Pencoed pack saw hooker Dewi Jury drive over, only to be adjudged held up.

Good driving play from Pencoed skipper Gary Money and Tom Swansbury set up a chance for Dean Coleman, the left wing shepherded out at the corner flag. The Pyle pack were beginning to assert themselves at the scrum, making life difficult for the Pencoed eight; however it was Pencoed who were next on the score-sheet, Williams moving the ball from within his own 22 for Dyer to break and make ground down the right hand touchline for supporting full back Tom Cross to score in the corner, and Pencoed led 5-8 at the interval.

Pencoed increased their lead at the opening of the second half with promising young forward Swansbury powering away from 35 metres out, scatter-

ing home defenders to underline his potential.

Wood then kicked a penalty to signal the home side's best period of the match. Moving the ball wide Pyle brought matters level at 13-13, left wing Ansen showing good pace to finish wide out. Within a minute the home side had taken a 20-13 lead, Ansen getting his second try and Wood adding the extras.

Things looked ominous for the league leaders going into the final 10 minutes, somehow managing to waste a three to one overlap.

Pyle countered and only a desperate ankle tap tackle from flanker Ricky Evans saved what could have been a match winning home score.

Evans, now playing as emergency left wing, was put in space and, swerving inside the home cover, found the supporting Cross who forced his way over. Williams added the conversion and it was anyone's match at 20-20.

Pyle went for victory, and a vital tackle from Cross on his own line saved his side. To their credit Pencoed defended a home scrum, and with their team under pressure, the Pencoed support would have settled for the away draw. The Pencoed players thought otherwise, half backs Tom Davies and Williams deciding to move the ball from their own line!

A sweeping attack took play into the home half once again their adventure got its reward, moving the ball from a set piece for Cross to split the Pyle midfield and avoid their desperate clutches to race in from 40 metres and dive over in triumph under the posts for his try hat-trick to seal a last gasp victory for his side.

Williams added the conversion, and then followed the final whistle much to the relief and joy of the Pencoed camp.

Final score 27-20.

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St Athan ladies end the year on a high!



St Athan ladies' golf year ended on a high with the usual end of year events.

The presentation evening was a great success for all the ladies, particularly those who managed to carry away several of the prestigious trophies and wonderful prizes.

Erin Allison was the proud winner of not only the ladies championship but was also the junior champion. We hope to see this young lady going places in the golfing world.

The evening started with the presentation of cheques from Ros

Martin-Jones, the lady captain, and Hugh Williams, the club captain, to Tom Archer of the Wales Air Ambulance. This was the culmination of a year's fundraising for this worthwhile charity by the whole of the club.

The traditional Christmas eclectic lunch saw prizes presented to Liz Thomas, Jayne Williams and Maureen Anderson, together with a small gift to all the ladies.

After consuming a sumptuous buffet, the ladies were entertained by the committee giving a hilarious rendering of 'If I were not a golfer' with a Dalek, Postman Pat,

Dennis the Menace (complete with water pistol) and many other characters causing total chaos and tears of laughter!

The ladies' Christmas dinner in the Riverview restaurant in Cowbridge saw an endless stream of delicious Chinese cuisine arrive at the table, much laughter and cheerful banter ending what has been a happy and enjoyable year.

The new year starts with the 2014 lady captain, Jenny Young's drive in on January 11 and we all wish her a happy and successful year.

RMJ

Chess team's narrow win

THE Barry Quarks Chess team were the last team to complete a match in 2013 when the visitors to the West End Club were the Cardiff Crowns.

Like the Quarks, the Crowns were surprisingly promoted from Division 3 last season but seem to have adapted better than both ourselves and the North Cardiff Cheetahs to life in the second division.

Ken Hannah, Sam White and Chris Green all earned victories with the ever dependable Kevin Gandy taking a draw to give us victory by a margin of 3.5 - 1.5.

We remain in ninth position but we are still in contact with the teams above us and are only 2.5 points from safety.

Normally, to avoid relegation you need to record six victories. To date we have only two so need to win four of our remaining nine matches. This is a tall order, bearing in mind that we are the lowest ranked team in the division.

The next two matches – the return fixture against the Crowns and a home match against the Cheetahs – are crucial if we are to avoid relegation.

The Barry Chess Club meets at 7.30pm each Monday at the West End Club, St. Nicholas Road, Barry CF62 6QY. The club is open to players of all standards; whether you are interested in playing competitive chess or just the occasional friendly games.

New players are very welcome to just turn up on the night but if you contact one of the club members through the website, we can explain what is happening on the night you have in mind, and arrange for someone to greet you on your arrival.

For more details visit our website: barrychess-club.yolasite.com.

PJ

Cefn RFC lose in poor conditions

Cefn RFC travelled away to Nantyffyllon, where the weather was wet and windy on a heavy sodden pitch.

From the starting whistle Cefn had to dig deep to stay with the Nantyffyllon forwards; time after time their pack dominated the possession and the Riders had to fight for any chance of the ball.

Cefn's defence throughout the game was exceptional, with the Curl brothers cutting the Nantyffyllon back line down. There were some good performances from debutants Stephen Gladwin, Dan Forester and Steve Parkhouse.

Cefn picked up their game just before the interval, scoring a cracking interception try by Rob Curl. This determination carried through to the second half, with the Riders sinking their teeth into everything, winning more of the 50/50 ball on the floor, with Luke Donne and Adam Ricketts working like terriers.

Cefn scored their second try, coming from the Riders' perseverance in the pack, finished off for

a well deserved try by Luke Donne. Nantyffyllon knew they were in a battle until the end, but the home team's experience paid off as they kept the pressure on and turned the screw, to win by 27-10.

ME

Players required

RHOOSE FC under-10s (year-5) require players.

If you have a boy or girl keen to play please telephone Paul on 07701 009661; home games are played at Celtic Way, Rhosce, but you don't have to live in Rhosce to play for the team.

Cowbridge darts

OVER the Christmas and New Year break there were no darts matches, so there are no results to report.

The present league standings remain: Llanharry (64 points), Edmondres B (54), Edmondres C (43), Hare and Hounds (37), Edmondres A (35), Highwayman Inn (34), Cross Inn (32), Farmers Arms (31), Old Post Ladies (14), The Star Inn (7).

The next matches are on Tuesday, January 14, when the Farmers Arms hosts the Cross Inn, the Star Inn hosts the Old Post Ladies, the Edmondres C hosts the Hare and Hounds, the Edmondres A hosts Llanharry and the Highwayman Inn hosts the Edmondres B.

For further information, e-mail Paul at cowbridgedarts@gmail.com. Up-to-date information can be found on the website: www.darts.apsn.co.uk.

PJT



ABOVE: Tom Archer, Ros Martin-Jones and Hugh Williams.



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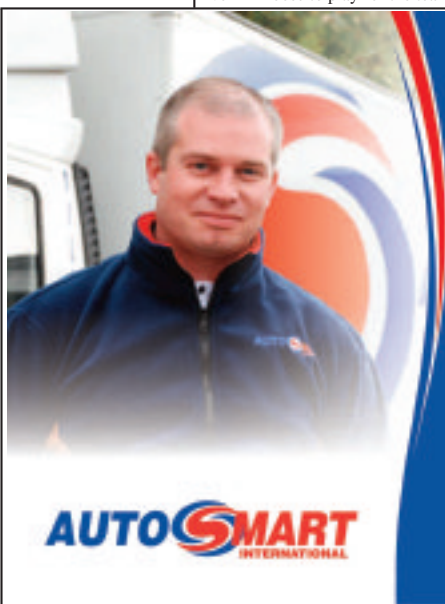


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GERAINT THOMAS,

41, Autosmart franchisee for Pontygridd.

Geraint Thomas had worked as a salesman, selling vehicle-cleaning products for 14 years. He always wondered whether the grass was greener elsewhere. When he saw the Autosmart franchise advertised, he realised that it was the perfect opportunity to be his own boss, to get out and about with work, meet new people and earn more money.

The Autosmart franchise was established in England in 1979, the first to provide professional products to the vehicle cleaning market via a network of 7.5 tonne vehicle showrooms. Over 30 years later they now have over 200 franchisees in countries as diverse as the UK, Netherlands, Australia, Belgium, Sweden and France.

Geraint's hard work and determination to succeed has meant that he's nearly trebled his sales and his income since starting in October 2005. Autosmart products are top quality", said Geraint. "All sorts of businesses use them - garages, car washes and car leasing companies to name a few".

Would Geraint recommend an Autosmart franchise? "Definitely! I'd make the same decision again. It's hard-work but the rewards are there - work hard, and you're bound to succeed."

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GEM sport

History's warning to Welsh rugby... 'HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND'

SHORTLY before his country was torn apart by a devastating Civil War that set brother against brother, future US President Abraham Lincoln took a lesson from scripture to famously warn - "A house divided against itself cannot stand" - a cautionary message the warring parties in Welsh rugby would also do well to heed.

For months, the widening dispute at the top of the national game between the four professional regions and the governing body, the WRU, has been followed with dismay and incredulity by the bemused rank and file who, after all, form the bulk of Welsh rugby.

The escalating war of words has grown ever more hostile - with threats, counter-threats and ultimatums seemingly heading inexorably to a complete schism that, we are told, could only be finally resolved in a court of law. Heaven forbid it should come to that!

In essence, the points at issue can be narrowed down to the declared intention of the four financially-troubled Welsh regions, which are partly funded by the WRU, to break away from Europe's officially-recognised Heineken Cup competition, which is broadcast by Sky TV.

Instead, they want to join a rival, unauthorised Rugby Champions Cup, initiated by the English Premiership clubs and their French equivalents, and underwritten by

BACK PAGE COMMENT by Don John

broadcasters BT Sport - which they claim would "bring in £12million per year in three years to the Welsh game".

"We need to play in a meaningful, financially-viable competition", they've insisted.

In the ensuing confusion, during which there has been an alarming Welsh player drain, they declined to renew their participation agreement with the Welsh Rugby Union, saying the Heineken Cup deal was "inferior".

Moreover, they declared they would not sign up when it was not clear what tournaments would be in place next year.

The four regions had also intimated that if there was no WRU approval by January 31 for them to join the Rugby Champions Cup, while continuing to play in the Pro12 (presumably with full Union funding) they could break away from WRU governance to join a new Anglo-Welsh league - or even seek to join an expanded Aviva Premiership (a move likely to be vehemently opposed by England's second-tier clubs).

The Welsh regions have accused the governing body of "failing miserably to ensure equal revenues with England and France" and of "vitriolic and derogatory attacks" after the WRU sent a letter to all 132 member clubs in Wales.

This pointed out that the regions were already funded through distribution of £9million in tournament income; plus £6.6million annually, direct from the WRU:

"That rose from £3.6million before 2009 when the participation agreement was signed, to reach £7million by September 2014, and £7.6million by the full term of the contract in 2019.

"As well as that agreed funding, the WRU spends £600,000 a year funding and staffing the regional rugby academies... That amounts to a potential £16million distribution for 2014," it stated.

"Wales is a small nation and we have to work within the reality of our situation, and allocate our limited funding accordingly. We cannot match French and English salary levels by the constant distribution of cash from within WRU resources..."

"That volume of cash does not exist in Welsh rugby", the letter added.

The statement spelt out the WRU's firm contractual commitment to the European (Heineken) Cup and the Pro12 league, which was "in the best interests of rugby", and it "would not countenance leaving Scotland and Ireland isolated from meaningful tournaments".

That would inevitably lead to a "spirit of decline... and, consequently, demise of the Six Nations into a meaningless and unattractive sporting competition" - a view hotly denied by the four Welsh regions.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the complex arguments, also involving central contracts, it is nevertheless surprising that Welsh regions should see their financial sal-

vation lies on the other side of Offa's Dyke in alliance with English clubs, who in truth, can hardly be expected to have Welsh rugby's best interests at heart!

Yes, the financial problems they face are real enough - but the harsh truth is these are surely at least partly linked to their performance on the field of play, particularly in Europe - and also an abject failure to fulfil their wider role and responsibilities as Welsh REGIONS - rather than 'town super clubs' by another name - over a whole decade of professionalism.

It is a very sad indictment of the current situation in Welsh rugby, which has never lacked for individual talent at all levels of the game, that the current regions seem unable to take up the undoubted challenge of seeking more pro-active (and inclusive) ways to develop their resources at home, rather than look elsewhere.

The WRU belatedly announced this week that it would be offering the regions a revised participation agreement and as The GEM went to press, rugby followers were waiting, somewhat nervously, to see if at last a potentially fatal civil war had been averted.

In his famous 1858 speech, referred to at the outset of this article, Abraham Lincoln said: "I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided".

Welsh rugby continues to live in hope...

Do you have a view on the crisis?
Write to: donjohn@tindlenews.co.uk

Bombettes pick up league trophy



The Bombettes at the WRU women's presentation evening.

CONGRATULATIONS to Barry Ladies RFC, 'The Bombettes', who collected their Division 2 league winners trophy during the WRU women's presentation evening on Saturday, January 4 at the Millennium Stadium.

A special mention to Lucy Cahill and Nikki Yapp who were nominated in the Player of Division 2 category, manager Rachel Baron for her nomination in the League Volunteer Award category and captain Kim Jones and Louise Shanahan on collecting their medals awarded for play-

ing regionally for Blues, who won the regional playoffs.

The team is looking forward to beginning the second half of the season, the cup, which last year saw 'The Bombettes' reach the final.

The first match is this Sunday, January 12, at home against Croesyceiliog RFC, kick off 2.30pm; supporters are always welcome!

Are you 18+, want to get fit and have some fun? We are now recruiting new players. You do not have to have any rugby experience as we have qualified WRU coaches who will help you learn the skills

needed.

There's no pressure to play straight away, just come along to one of our training sessions and see what women's rugby can offer you.

We currently train at Bryn Hafren Astro and Barry RFC on a Tuesday and Thursday evening. As training is subject to change in winter months, find us on Facebook, 'BarryLadies Rfc', or contact manager Rachel on 07889 742153 for times or for more information.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

KJ

Golf Club sports bar in memory of Colin

RIGHT: Paddy Moore and Jodi Winter at the opening of the Colin Jones sports bar at Brynhill Golf Club.

THE new Colin Jones sports bar at Brynhill Golf Club was recently opened by Miss Jodi Winter and club captain Mr Paddy Moore.

The sports bar was named in memory of Colin Jones, a club member and solicitor.

Contributing to the refurbishment were Jodi Winter and family, Rhys Jones of Phoenix Building Company, LNC Carpeting, Nick Gray, the Clicketts golf section and the seniors' golf section.

Past ladies' captains Mrs Robbie Lee and Mrs Jo Kirkpatrick donated a flat screen television on behalf of the ladies' golf section.

The evening was supported by over 100 members and their guests.

The new bar heralds a step forward into the future for Brynhill Golf Club.

JK



Sully bridge

MONDAY,

December 30,

North/South:

1st Anne Johns/John Pikoulis 69.26, 2nd Trish Tracy/Mike Hurst 64.81, 3rd Pat Evans/Jame Greatrex 62.33.

East/West: 1st Italo Basiletti/Sean MacDougall 63.07, 2nd Mair Colley/Chris Davies 60.46, 3rd Anne MacDougall/Anne

Hilary Jones 58.50.

Wednesday, January

1, North/South: 1st

Peter Millar/Trish Tracy 63.93, 2nd Ev Kerslake/Beryl Marke 51.07, 3rd Pat Evans/Roger Cradick 50.00.

East/West: 1st Una Gavin/Sean MacDougall 64.58, 2nd Anne MacDougall/Anne Hilary Jones 56.25, 3rd Janet Cunningham/John Warlock 51.67.

EK